

Learning to Die in London,
1380–1540

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Amy Appleford



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AMY APPLEFORD

PENN

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For Nicholas

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NOTE ON QUOTATIONS

In this book I cite a variety of Middle English editions, manuscript sources, early printed books, and other records, and the representation of these records is necessarily somewhat eclectic. All Middle English quotations normalize use of the letter pairings *u/v* and *i/j*, place a hyphen before the past participle prefix (*y-*), and follow modern word division in cases where there could be confusion.

Introduction

This book is an account of the literature and culture of death and mortality in fifteenth- and early sixteenth-century London as it relates to the broad theme of governance. It takes as its focus a body of writings in several different genres circulating in England's capital between the 1380s, a generation after the Black Death, and the 1530s, the first decade of the English Reformation. I argue that the schooled awareness of mortality was a vital aspect of civic culture, critical not only to the individual's experience of interiority and the management of families and households but also to the practices of cultural memory, institution building, and the government of the city itself. At a time when an increasingly laicized religiosity coexisted with an ambitious program of urban renewal and cultural enrichment, and sometimes with violent political change, having an educated attitude to death was understood as essential to good living in the widest sense.

In fifteenth-century London, as elsewhere in northern Europe, a complex of new ways of representing, preparing for, and even undergoing death gained enhanced cultural power, informing the behavior and perceptions of the city's citizens and institutions and acting as key public markers of responsible civic engagement and identity. During the period between the accession of Henry IV in 1399 and that of Henry VII in 1485 in particular, when the confidence of the city and its governors was at its height, death discourse was one of the most visible features of London public culture. Death was understood by a broad spectrum of the city's elites as a generative force: one capable of providing vital personal, institutional, social, and literary as well as religious opportunities. A new understanding of death as an *ars* or "craft," something to be learned and managed, also made possible new techniques of self-examination. Intrinsically affective, these techniques in turn made personally intimate the turbulence of fifteenth- and early sixteenth-century transformations in the religious and political culture of city and realm.

My book explores the particularities of London death culture in relation to a series of vernacular texts, the earliest of which is *The Visitation of the Sick*, an anonymous work from around 1380 that may be northern Europe's first vernacular guide to the deathbed, and the

latest *A Preparation to Death*, a translation of Erasmus's *De praeparatione ad mortem*, also anonymous, printed in 1538. Reading image-texts such as the *Daunce of Poulys* and literary texts such as Thomas Hoccleve's *Series* alongside deathbed manuals, meditations, tribulation treatises, catechetical instructions, almshouse ordinances, and wills, I also attend to the books in which such materials circulated, to the institutional contexts that gave them purchase, and, where possible, to identifiable readers, most of them male members of London's lay elite. Since London's literary and religious culture evolved rapidly during this period and was exceptionally open to international influence, I track cultural and religious change on the European, as well as English, stage and the role played by death texts of French, Italian, German, and Austrian origin in the metropolis and among those who lived and died in it. Taking its cue from the medieval Christian understanding of death itself, as an event most straitly bounded in time and space yet also a portal to the infinite and eternal, my book affirms the indissolubility of the secular and the sacred in the public culture of fifteenth-century London and argues for the importance of taking their interpenetration seriously.

Learning to Die in London is the first book-length study of the English *ars moriendi* during the long fifteenth century and contributes to a surprisingly small body of specialist literature on the subject.¹ This does not mean that the topic will seem unfamiliar to medievalists or, indeed, to early modernists. On the contrary, it seems to attach so naturally to the period as hardly to need discussion. It is a truism that, in the centuries after the European Black Death of 1348–50, death became a focus of special intensity even by the standards of an era for which it was always a preoccupation. Figured by the skeletons that occupy the lower compartments of “transi” tombs or link bony hands with representatives of the “estates” of late medieval society in the *Danse macabre*, death functions as a potent symbol of the period's difference from the modern.

Occasionally, this difference is seen in positive terms. For example, in Eamon Duffy's well-known study of fifteenth-century religion, *The Stripping of the Altars*, the communal orientation of late medieval death culture grounds a lay religiosity centered on the rhythms of parish life, as part of the concerted attempt made by late medieval moral teachers to persuade the laity of the transience of earthly pleasures and goods and the need to seek eternal salvation at all costs.² Like Philippe Ariès in *Homme devant la mort* (translated as *The Hour of Our Death*),³ Duffy emphasizes medieval death culture's *longue durée*, focusing on the most slowly changing aspects of what he calls “traditional” practice, especially the Latin liturgical *Ordo ad visitandum infirmum* (visitation

of the sick) and the rites of burial, requiem, and commemoration or “mind” that followed, during the century before these were disrupted by the English Reformation.

More often, however, even in recent work, late medieval death culture is quite casually understood as obsessive or morbid: the product, as Johan Huizinga asserted nearly a century ago, of “deep psychological strata of fear” of death on the one hand and “a kind of spasmodic reaction against an excessive sensuality” on the other, on the part of a culture that, in some accounts, was itself morbid to the core.⁴ The sheer elaborateness of late medieval death culture, its masses, chantry chapels, purgatory visions, its focus on inculcating penitence, fear, and *contemptus mundi* provides scholars of secular culture with a further reason to avoid engaging with religion and scholars of medieval religious culture with a reason to prefer different topics. Outside medieval studies, the topos that Renaissance or Reformation modernity was born from a repudiation of the death “fixation” figured by these phenomena—that modernity embraces life, where the medieval embraced death—often goes unquestioned even by scholars of the early modern phases of the *ars moriendi* tradition itself.⁵ In recent decades, social historians and art historians have begun to work behind the clichés grounding these generalizations, producing local analyses that seek to take the variety of late medieval practices and representations of death on their own terms.⁶ In other medieval disciplines, including my own field of literary studies, a tendency to think of death practice and attitudes as static and generalized persists.

Pointedly avoiding discussion of morbidity and the “macabre,” then, I aim in this book to offer more nuanced ways to read textual representations of death produced during the course of the long fifteenth century. I read these representations less as the unconscious expression of a *mentalité* or shared psychic state than as “polemic and argumentative ... rooted in historical contingency,” as Sarah Beckwith memorably did for images of *corpus Christi* nearly twenty years ago.⁷ Death is at once a natural fact and acculturated through the human production of meaning. Death discourse bridges this world and the next, evoking an urgent concentration on temporal bodies, eternal souls, and their prospects in situations whose intensity tests the limits of reason, discipline, affection, and belief. Death discourse also bridges self and community, the personal, familial, and civic, seeking to channel this intensity to productive ends. By examining the period’s most influential cultural forms of death in a specific locale, and by exploring the effects of these forms, I mean to show that the period’s imaginations of death are intentional and mobile, in dialogue with and responsive to doctrinal, social, and economic change.

In focusing on a series of Middle English death texts circulating in fifteenth- and early sixteenth-century London, I am concerned primarily throughout with the larger role the *artes moriendi*—understood very broadly as texts that offer or depict a way of dying well—play in the public culture of the city. The geographical focus is intentionally limited. An increased interest in the *ars moriendi* in the fifteenth century was a European phenomenon. My focus on London is not intended to suggest otherwise, but instead allows for textured analysis of the forms and functions of the genre in a limited area across a 150-year period. It also enables me to contribute to our knowledge of late medieval London.⁸

Like other cities, London had special reasons to engage in public, as well as private, reflection on death and mortality. Urban crowding meant that life expectancy was likely to be lower than elsewhere, even as urban wealth guaranteed influxes of new residents: in the demographically reduced but far richer city of the postplague era, funerals might outnumber births. As “Troynovaunt”—the city mythically founded by Brut after he fled from the old Troy—London was much aware of its survival beyond the lifetimes of individual generations of citizens and took care to ensure and represent its own longevity, both artistically and through institution building.⁹ Like its public art, most of its churches, almshouses, prisons, hospitals, roads, drains, and urinals owed their existence to the huge charitable bequests contemporary death practice expected of wealthy citizens and to the legal maneuvers that preserved the fortunes made in life by those who were now corpses through “perpetual” corporations. But as a prototype of the New Jerusalem, which understood even the mayoral justice dispensed at the London Guildhall as an image of divine justice, it was also much aware of its own earthly mortality.

In this wealthy, devout, and heavily laicized context, a number of the traditional functions of the *ars moriendi* acquired a newly honed importance. Death provided the occasion for the penitential inculcation, often through literary texts, of the ascetic mindfulness, moral discipline, and acts of charity that the transcendent reality behind it required even of the city’s worldliest citizens, informing the behavior of specific individuals of wealth and power such as Richard Whittington, moneylender to the Crown and three times the city’s mayor, in definite ways. It allowed executors and others a means of renewing the city’s charitable institutions and the cityscape as a whole, using moneys from testamentary bequests—whose principal aim was to speed wealthy merchant donors through purgatory—to creative new ends, such as improving the quality of the city’s religious education. It offered the opportunity for imaginatively rich ethical reflection, in poetry and public art, on the tragic nature of temporality

for a mercantile community perpetually bound, like London itself, to Fortune's wheel. As a ground of homiletic instruction in several textual and visual genres, it acted as a spur to social differentiation and community discipline.

Although the study covers a wide range of vernacular texts, it focuses substantially on seven death texts in common London circulation. Three of these are deathbed manuals: the *Visitation of the Sick* (c. 1380); *The Book of the Craft of Dying* (c. 1430), a translation of the *Tractatus de arte bene moriendi* (c. 1420); and, more loosely, Erasmus's *Preparation to Death* (printed 1538). Two are treatises on death meditation: Henry Suso's *Learn to Die* (c. 1335), available in English to Londoners as part of the *Seven Points of True Love* (c. 1390) and in Hoccleve's verse version that forms the climax of the *Series* (c. 1420); and Richard Whitford's *Daily Exercise of Death* (printed 1534). Two are more miscellaneous: the series of wall panels known as the *Dauunce of Poulys*, its text based on John Lydgate's *Dance of Death* (c. 1430s), itself based on the Parisian *Danse macabre*; and Thomas Lupset's *A Treatise of Dying Well* (printed 1534), an oration on overcoming fear of death by remaining mindful of it.

Discussed in rough order of circulation and reading history, rather than composition, these texts and the works with which they traveled or are associated tell a layered story about changes in what constituted the "good death" in London from 1380 to 1540 and imply a larger account of parallel changes in the city's religious, literary, and political culture across this period. The theme of continuing cultural change comes especially to the fore in discussing the establishment of early fifteenth-century death culture in [Chapter 1](#) and its successive transformations in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries in [Chapters 4](#) and [5](#).

For much of the book, however, I am concerned not with what these texts tell us about changes across time but with an interest they all share: the role of death preparation in forms of good governance, that is, in the virtuous ordering of the polity, and the importance of a proper attitude toward mortality on the part of subjects and their secular and religious rulers. In focusing on this theme, I am indebted to James Simpson's *Reform and Cultural Revolution*, whose model of late medieval English society as structured according to a complex "set of adjacent, interdependent, and competing jurisdictions" I have found productive throughout this study.¹⁰ But I am also following the lead of the death texts themselves, all of which have intrinsic relationships with fifteenth-century "feudal, civic, and religious" structures of governance, participating in important ways in real world struggles for authority or in the literary imagination of legitimate jurisdiction.¹¹ The first three chapters of the book in

particular are loosely organized around a specific model of governance well known in late medieval London, and ideally suited to discussion of the various “jurisdictions” that influence and are influenced by the *ars moriendi* and their complex interplay. This is the tripartite Aristotelian model that seeks to relate three principal arenas of political and ethical action: the self, the household, and the city.

The synthetic approach to self-government, domestic government, and civic government integral to Aristotle’s *Politics* was regularly invoked in discussions of politics from the early thirteenth century on, in the many academic commentaries on the work, in the late fourteenth-century French translation by Nicole Oresme, and in Latin and vernacular treatises written under Aristotle’s influence.¹² As described in John Trevisa’s translation of Giles of Rome’s late thirteenth-century *De regimine principum*, *The Governance of Kings and Princes* (1390s), self, household, and city are tightly integrated locales in which forms of control and rule, rightly practiced, together produce a harmonious and virtuous polity. Following Giles, Trevisa divides his work into three books, beginning with “how the kynges majeste, and so how everiche man, schal rule hymself,” that is, with the branches of governance known as “ethica and monastica”; continuing with “how a [he] schal rewle his meyne [household],” that is, with “Iconomyk, a sciens of housbondrie”; and concluding with the “parfite” topic of “how a schal rule a cite and a regne,” that is, with “politica.”¹³ My own analysis does not follow what Trevisa calls his “resonable and kinde” order, since it makes best historical and expository sense to begin with the second term, “Iconomyk, a sciens of housbondrie.” As Trevisa later defines it, this is the rule “eche citeyn” should exercise over “his owne hous and maynye, not onlich for [because] suche reulyng is his owne profit but also for suche reulyng is i-ordeyned to þe comyn profit, as to þe profit of regne and of citee.”¹⁴ Nonetheless, I stay close to the central insight and demand of this Aristotelian system, that the areas in which “governance” is practiced are at once separate and integrated, and attend often to the demands such an ethical politics imposed, even as I also explore the limits of its reach.

As Sarah Rees Jones has demonstrated, London governors made a concerted effort in the fifteenth century to make the household a subset and arm of the city’s governing structure, “a place of good government in which the harmonious ends of civic government might be achieved.”¹⁵ In a recasting of an old system of local governance known as “frankpledge,” whose origins are Anglo-Saxon, adult male householders were made legally responsible for the physical well-being and good behavior of their *familiae*, which included not only their natural kin but also those living in under their roof including

servants and apprentices.¹⁶ In particular, fifteenth-century London householders were expected, as Shannon McSheffrey has shown, to monitor and regulate the moral and sexual conduct of their dependents and servants.¹⁷ Several of the books containing a version of *The Visitation of the Sick* discussed in [Chapter 1](#), some from London, others associated with the West Midlands, seem to have cognizance of this developing system, extending it in certain cases to give householders similar responsibility for their tenants.

The majority of the *artes moriendi* treated in this book appear in at least one manuscript or printed book addressed to a householder audience, suggesting that part of the householder's newly intensified role as moral overseer also extended to the end of life of his dependents. Despite the wholly masculine deathbed scene depicted on the front cover of this book, documentary evidence suggests that women did the actual difficult work of looking after the physical needs of the sick and getting the dead ready for burial. However, it seems that, at least ideally, the head of the household exercised moral governance over the dying, supporting Felicity Riddy's suggestion that, at the fifteenth-century sickbed, "the physician counsels, the sovereign—the person in charge—issues precepts: the nurse ... gets on with the business of care."¹⁸ In crucial ways, moreover, overseeing the death of a dependent as represented in these household books appears to be unlike many of the other duties assigned to the London householder, for it is understood as a *spiritual* responsibility, overlapping significantly with the spiritual jurisdiction of the priest. This enlargement of lay spiritual jurisdiction explains, for example, the frequent appearance of the "E" version of the *Visitation of the Sick* alongside works that deal explicitly with the broad responsibilities of the householder. Although this is for several reasons a complex case, it may also explain the frequency with which surviving copies of *The Book of the Craft of Dying*, the death text discussed in [Chapter 4](#), contain ownership inscriptions from late fifteenth or early sixteenth-century guildsmen and members of the urban gentry.

Governance of the self through *ethica monastica* (personal ethics) is also an important object of interest for fifteenth-century *artes moriendi* and tribulation texts, certain of which develop ascetic praxes derived from monastic or eremitic literature, including *meditatio mortis* and other imaginative forms of self-negation. Newly translated and adapted for use by a lay audience, monastic praxes shape an inner, lay asceticism, responsive to the desires of pious, educated, and privileged lay Londoners to participate in the perfectionist life of enclosed religious. The presence of the death text central to [Chapter 3](#), Suso's *Learn to Die*, in a number of lay manuscripts of the later fifteenth century and as the climactic element in Hoccleve's *Series* is one sign of

the spread of this ascetic-derived lay religiosity; Whitford's repurposing of his *Daily Exercise and Experience of Death*, originally written for the Syon nuns, for lay householders is a second; in another register, Lupset's understanding of the scholar's life of court service as a potential philosopher's martyrdom in the *Treatise of Dying Well* is a third. While the artes moriendi that support household governance enlarge the jurisdiction of lay male household heads, ascetic death texts counsel meditation on the ephemerality of the body and the social and temporal world, nurturing continence and inwardness. In practice, however, and particularly toward the end of the period, these two modes of death text often travel together, as interlocking elements.

The most "parfite" and demanding of the modes of governance outlined by Trevisa, the rule of "citees" and "regnes," supposedly both supports and depends on the other two—and the most spectacular manifestation of London public death culture discussed in [Chapter 2](#), the *Daunce of Poulys*, indeed works precisely to reinforce the proper rule of self and household as a means to strengthen and sustain the civic body. In the *Daunce of Poulys*, the undifferentiated language of spiritual equality in the face of death that belongs to traditional death discourse ("death the leveler") retains its affective force, as dying representatives of each estate, joined hand in hand each with its own death and with one another, face their common end together. Yet the city governors had a particular investment in perpetuating an image of the city as a mortality community, as they encouraged London's inhabitants to embrace virtue and avoid vice—including vices that transgressed the city's laws and economic order—in order to die well, even if taken suddenly by death. In principle, they also worked to internalize the ethical understanding of the political integral to Aristotelian political thought within their own professional and household circles, as becomes clear from the emphasis on right rule in the extensive library owned by the most prominent of these governors, John Carpenter.

A public spectacle of death even more effective than the "daunce" in inculcating virtuous and lawful behavior in the city appears in the sixteenth century, now overseen not by a city functionary but by those of the Tudor kings, in the shape of the remarkable increase in public execution of felons and traitors at Tyburn and other busy London gallows. Here, the Aristotelian model spectacularly breaks down, as a different strand of ethical thought, the Stoic, a constant in artes moriendi from *The Visitation of the Sick* on, comes to the rescue, now in order to help readers face not merely the fortunes of lay living and dying in a general sense but the urgent and specific experience that is death at the hands of the tyrant. Even here, however, the integral

relation between the *ars moriendi* and governance holds. While only one of three main artes discussed in [Chapter 5](#), Whitford's *Daily Exercise and Experience of Death*, actively works to protect the household as a locus of governance, the sudden rush of new arts of dying appearing in print through the 1530s discussed here all take care to include meditations involving state execution into new paradigms of urban death preparation.

My focus here on London and on governance thus allows me to trace in detail some of the ways in which death discourse is implicated in the literary, political, and religious culture of the city and responds to changes in each. My contention throughout is that developments in death discourse are related to wider cultural developments and that death discourse was an active and still comprehensible component of long fifteenth-century thought, society, and belief. The language of morbidity, obsession, decadence, and trauma has no useful place in its historical analysis. While the *ars moriendi* may seek to move and disturb, it always has definite ends in view. Far from seeing the *ars moriendi* emerge from this analysis as a symbol of medieval alterity or the exhaustion of the fifteenth century, if we track its place within its cultural and representative order, we find the period more available to understanding, not less.

There remains the possibility that the special interest in death in long fifteenth-century art and literature bears a direct relation to the Black Death of 1348–50 and its several successors, a possibility that usually in some way underlies the “morbidity” thesis. Unforgettably evoked at the beginning of Boccaccio's *Decameron*, plague is the explicit backdrop to a select number of literary representations of death, including Chaucer's *Pardoner's Tale*, the apocalyptic final passus of Langland's *Piers Plowman*, and the Parisian *Danse macabre*, painted facing an overflowing charnel house.¹⁹ Developing out of the author's unusual desire to experience “a bodelye sykenes ... so harde as to the dede,” including the final rites, Julian's *Vision Showed to a Devout Woman* and *Revelation of Love* may reflect the enhanced awareness of death on the part of those, like her, who had lived through the plague.²⁰

Although all these examples save one belongs to the fourteenth century, the Black Death was vividly remembered in fifteenth-century London, not least because of the ways in which it materially and symbolically shaped the cityscape. The spate of fifteenth-century almshouse building in fifteenth-century London touched on in [Chapter 2](#) need have no relation to plague and its memories. But in the course of this book, we visit two of the city's pardon churchyards—emergency cemeteries where Londoners who had died unconfessed

were buried, their sins forgiven by special dispensation—both of them key cultural sites associated with the plague: the first connected with the sacred and heavily politicized space around St Paul’s, the second with the London Charterhouse, symbol of the city’s devotion to the ascetic ideal, outside the walls at Smithfield and near the ancient hospital of St Bartholomew’s.

I do not dismiss the Black Death hypothesis, even if I suspect that the major effects of the plague on late medieval urban death culture had as much to do with shifts in the relationship between the clergy and the laity after the deaths of so many ministering priests, or with the new concentration of urban wealth enabled by population reduction and enhanced social mobility, as with the long shadow of the terrible event itself.²¹ Yet to treat the plague as a singular cultural trauma is to seal off late medieval death discourse both from other periods of history and from a fluid and constructive relationship with long fifteenth-century culture itself. Besides, literary and visual imaginations of death are hardly confined to the fifteenth century. Death is at the theological center of Christianity, and mortality is a preoccupation in insular vernacular literature from the Anglo-Saxon period onward. As we see in [Chapter 1](#), many devotional and ritual practices associated with the *ars moriendi* predate the Black Death by hundreds of years.

Moreover, the *ars moriendi* flourished for centuries after the plague had become a distant memory. Sophisticated literary *artes moriendi* appear for at least three centuries after the genre’s emergence into the vernacular in the late fourteenth century, from John Donne to Jeremy Taylor and beyond.²² A major recent study of the American Civil War traces the art of dying as a praxis, still recognizably connected to its medieval predecessor, into the mid-nineteenth century.²³ The ideal of the “good death,” central to the *ars moriendi*, has become a controversial issue in contemporary hospice care.²⁴ If anything, the *ars moriendi* is a sign of cultural continuity across the centuries, not disjuncture. As we see in [Chapter 5](#), the attempt to distinguish the postmedieval *ars moriendi* from its medieval predecessor by arguing for an epistemic transformation is untenable. The densest cluster of original vernacular death manuals discussed in this book belong not to the fifteenth century but to the 1530s: the beginning, in the cultural imaginary, of Western modernity. Moreover, the appearance of three new and popular *ars moriendi* within a decade has nothing to do with the natural disaster of the plague, but appears to be a response to human actions, as another kind of public manifestation of mass death appears in the form of judicial executions.

Most important for my purposes, however, making too direct a causal association between fifteenth-century death culture and the Black Death does not allow for a differentiated and flexible analysis of the complex cultural forms in question: it shuts down the conversation. Study of London's innovations in representing death illuminates several processes of cultural change, centrally, as I argue, in relation to government and, in the broadest sense, jurisdiction. Here I will mention two others, both of current interest. One is the process of laicization: the pronounced shift of emphasis toward the laity and their concerns that is one of the best-known phenomena of the decades after the Great Schism of 1376, generating much of the vernacular theology produced in late medieval England and Europe. In the three decades from 1380 to 1410, an important face of laicization in England was the radical political and theological agenda associated with John Wyclif, fiercely critical of monasticism and the secular church and demanding a reorientation of authority in the church, effectively, around lay elites.²⁵ But Wycliffism was not the only reformist force of the period, and laicizing reform survived the movement's suppression, taking on and making mainstream parts of its agenda as it went.²⁶ The *Visitation of the Sick* itself, especially in its expanded rewriting for wealthy lay users, circulated in early fifteenth-century London books whose contents are inflected by Wycliffism but whose agenda is in tune with the normative, and increasingly confident, lay religiosity of the period.

Despite the presence in the city of impressive numbers of highly educated rectors, cathedral canons, and other religious,²⁷ important aspects of the spiritual life of fifteenth-century London were in concrete ways in the hands of its civic governors. For reasons explored in this study, the discourse of death was one of their basic resources. Baptism, the Eucharist, confession, and other sacraments, including the unction given the very ill: all these moments of sacramental contact with the transcendent required a priest. In the practices we see emerge in the *Visitation of the Sick* and other accounts of the deathbed, the "good death" that all serious Christians hoped to achieve did not. Laymen could and should attend the deathbeds of other laymen. Moreover, because the laity lived their lives in intense contact with the "world"—from a monastic viewpoint they *were* the world—their death, although in one respect spiritually worrisome, was for that very reason also an area of especially intimate concern and focus.

A second aspect of cultural change illuminated by analysis of London's vigorous investment in death and dying is the city's internationalism. Much the nation's largest commercial and political center and the heart of its book trade, London was a key point of collection and distribution for new insular texts and ideas. But the

city's close connections to other urban centers in Continental Europe also made it easy for it to remain abreast of fashions in the discussion and representation of death as they developed rapidly in France, Germany, Italy, Austria, and Bohemia—part of a wider turn toward the pastorally oriented religiosity that characterized the period between the reformist activism of the Council of Constance in 1414–18 and the advent of Lutheranism a century later. Even as they engaged with the long-lasting implications of the insular reformism associated with John Wyclif, the city's early fifteenth-century governors, spiritual and political, were aware of Continental reformers like Jean Gerson, Bernardino of Siena, Johannes Nider, Nikolaus von Dinkelsbühl, and Jan Hus, and movements like the Observant Reform and the *Devotio Moderna*. In the early sixteenth century, Luther's works were read, and indeed publicly burned, in the city within a few years of their writing, while the web of trading connections between the city and Continental Europe, not least in connection with the book trade, made efforts to prevent their circulation an exercise in futility.

A few privileged Londoners—including some who were neither citizens nor governors but rather members of the class that Rosemary Horrox, in a classic article, has defined as “urban gentry”²⁸—had early knowledge of the fifteenth-century Continental best seller *Tractatus de arte bene moriendi* through its English translation of around 1430, *The Book of the Craft of Dying*. Hoccleve's *Lerne to Die* may be an early response to the growing devotional prestige of Suso's *Horologium sapientiae* among the early fifteenth-century French aristocracy. The *Daunce of Poulys*, commissioned by the city's common clerk John Carpenter, may have been in place within a decade of the Parisian *Danse macabre* itself, the earliest of hundreds of European imitations of that artwork. Carpenter's extensive library included a copy of another kind of death text, Francesco Petrarch's *De remediis utriusque fortunae*, a handbook for wealthy laymen struggling to keep their lives, and souls, intact in the face of the unpredictability of fortune: the most renowned of many works circulating in London inflected by Christian humanism (and, through it, Senecan Stoicism) that helped establish the reciprocal relationship between learning to die and living in the world that is a signature of London lay death discourse. At the end of the period covered in this book, Erasmus's *De praeparatione ad mortem* was written as the result of a commission from Thomas Boleyn, the father of Anne Boleyn, and translated within four years into English for London publication.

The public culture that emerged around death in long fifteenth-century London was sophisticated and richly multivalent: admonitory and celebratory, penitential and sumptuous, communitarian and hierarchic at the same time. As the ordered and articulated depiction

of the professions in the *Daunce of Poulys* suggests, dying in the fifteenth century had become an increasingly imbricated social practice in which distinctions of lay status were reinforced even at the moment of the dissolution of the individual self. With energetic, self-aware, and paradoxically positive intensity, death discourse informs and reflects the living interests and concerns of the city, its citizens, and its rulers. The picture darkens as the fifteenth century, and the book, moves forward. Based on a Latin work produced as part of an early fifteenth-century reformist counterattack against heresy and moral decay, the *Tractatus de arte bene moriendi*, the *Craft of Dying* introduces a note of spiritual anxiety and, perhaps, exclusivism to the English deathbed, while more secular professional and physical anxieties are at play in the death texts of the 1530s. Yet the core function of the *ars moriendi*, to make the fact of death productive, comprehensible, and tolerable within a given cultural system, remains. Death itself changes across the course of the period I describe; the necessity of learning to die does not.

Chapter 1, “Spiritual Governance and the Lay Household: *The Visitation of the Sick*,” works closely with a group of little-studied texts, including the *Ordo ad visitandum infirmum* from the Sarum rite, the “A” and “E” versions of *The Visitation of the Sick*, and the didactic treatise *The Fyve Wyttes*, to lay out the particular model of laicization on which the more specifically urban and socioliterary studies that follow depend. During the late fourteenth century, the deathbed became the key site at which a model of Christian community increasingly independent of the sacramental apparatus that had long surrounded dying was performed. *The Visitation of the Sick* (c. 1380) provides a glimpse into this phenomenon. Combining two early twelfth-century Latin texts, the Anselmian *Admonitio morienti* and the *De Visitacione infirmorum* by the humanist abbot and archbishop Baudri de Bourgueil (1045/6–1130), the shorter *Visitation A* provides a text useful for lay and clerical deathbed attendants, introduces an affective and Christocentric theology not part of the Latin ritual, and reconfigures the relations between the dying person and the officiant around the humanistic discourse of *amicitia*. Grounded in the theology of the “corporal works of mercy,” the longer *Visitation E* introduces into the egalitarian ideology of the deathbed community a new emphasis on social hierarchy, as the responsibilities of temporal lordship extend to the deathbed itself. In a series of books containing *Visitation E*, several connected to London, the deathbed becomes a site of spiritual governance by privileged laypeople, making possible lay participation in the “mixed” life usually assigned to bishops.

Chapter 2, “Dying Generations: *The Dance of Death*,” takes up the

link between mortality and government described in [Chapter 1](#) to discuss how London's common clerk John Carpenter (d. 1442) exploits orthodox death discourse both to commemorate the former mayor Richard Whittington (d. 1423) and to perpetuate an image of the city as a mortality community. Rather than being used for remembrances in the form of the obits that prayed so many other successful merchants through purgatory, the moneys left by Whittington to pay for postmortem works of mercy funded a set of building projects, including an almshouse, a college of priests, and a library, that significantly recast older religious forms with lay Londoners' edification in mind. As Whittington's main executor, Carpenter masterminded both these projects and the smaller ones that made the Whittington arms a ubiquitous feature of the cityscape. As common clerk, he also used the city's moneys to fund other death projects. Chief among these was the *Daunce of Poulys*, a public artwork inflected, like the Whittington projects, by the laicized reformism exemplified by *Visitation E* but also indebted to a second, humanist tradition that understands the value of death preparation in specifically this-worldly terms. I suggest that the ethos of the Guildhall, especially its joint concern with the city's longevity and with its virtue, found expression in the *Daunce of Poulys*. Offering an image of community that emphasizes diversity, temporality, and social hierarchy even in the face of death, the placement of the *Daunce of Poulys* defends civic society's interests in the precinct of London's cathedral.

[Chapter 3](#), "Self-Care and Lay Asceticism: *Learn to Die*," turns from household government and civic government to self-government, focusing on the meditations on mortification and death that became integral to the specifically laicized forms of asceticism practiced by privileged fifteenth-century Londoners, on the role of voice in these meditations, and on their functions in creating personal identities characterized by forms of spiritual elitism. The chapter reads two groups of texts circulating in London manuscripts, both of which feature versions of the "learn to die" chapter from Henry Suso's mid-fourteenth-century *Horologium sapientiae*. The first group, found in a well-known series of manuscripts owned by a group of wealthy London families, includes *Pety Job*, a Middle English long lyric poem based on the nine lessons from the Book of Job in the Office of the Dead; *Twelve Profits of Tribulation*, a fifteenth-century prose translation of the late thirteenth-century *De duodecim utilitatibus temptationibus*; and the Middle English prose Suso translation taken from the *Seven Points of True Love*. Collectively, these texts offer wealthy Londoners a means to turn success and failure, pleasure and suffering, into the ascetic experience of tribulation, mortifying their secular urges and

fostering both the ideal of patience and a new, distinctively fractured mode of subjectivity.

The second group consists of the first three items in Hoccleve's last major poetic achievement, the *Series* (early 1420s)—the *Complaint*, the *Dialogue*, and an amplified verse translation of the death chapter of Suso's *Horologium sapientiae* called *Lerne to Dye*—which together represent a similar construction of an ascetic identity through the contemplation of adversity and death. The *Series* is often read as Hoccleve's attempt to be reaccepted into the London literary and political community from which he had been exiled by illness. I suggest that these three sections of the poem instead sketch a program of interior asceticism and conversion that rests on the public *continuation* of his break with society. At the household and civic level, death discourse retained much of its traditionally communitarian emphasis. At the personal, penitential level, as Hoccleve shows us, it took on individualizing properties, shaping the soul so that it need not rely on the prevalent economy of purgatorial prayers and indulgences. Dying to the world on a daily basis, the inward ascetic Hoccleve draws on what David Lawton has called the “public resources for interiority” offered by mortification discourse, transforming the experience of social alienation and self-fragmentation into the foundation of eremitic and prophetic speech.²⁹

The first three chapters all focus on the first five decades of the fifteenth century, the decades of Hoccleve, Lydgate, and Carpenter, of the building of the charities associated with Whittington, and of the intensive circulation of *The Visitation of the Sick*. [Chapter 4](#), “Wounded Texts and Worried Readers: *The Book of the Craft of Dying*,” an account of the origins, contents, and social contexts of *The Book of the Craft of Dying*, begins to move the discussion toward the end of the century. A close Middle English translation of the enormously popular Latin *Tractatus de arte bene moriendi*, the *Craft of Dying* may have been produced as early as 1430 but mostly circulated, almost exclusively in London manuscripts, between the later fifteenth and the early sixteenth centuries. The *Tractatus* is a thoroughly rewritten and vastly expanded version of the final part of Jean Gerson's pastoral treatise *Opusculum tripartitum* (1405–14), a work written to support the work of secular priests and to standardize the pastoral care associated with the deathbed. Perhaps produced in the environs of the University of Vienna during the difficult years surrounding the heresy trials and burnings of Jan Hus and Jerome of Prague, the *Tractatus* is informed by Gerson's fierce reformist energies, but focuses, unusually, on a split lay and monastic readership, insisting on the spiritual capability and responsibility that individuals in both communities have to help their colleagues die. In enjoining the lay user to behave like a monastic and

the monastic user to behave like a virtuous lay person as he or she shapes a *mors provisa*, the work reflects the mix of conservatism on the theological level and innovation on the ecclesiastical and practical levels characteristic of the Continental Observant Reform movement and the great councils of Pisa and Constance with which it is associated.

Chapter 5, “The Exercise of Death in Henrician England,” examines the English death culture of the 1530s, the first decade of the English Reformation. In his *Sermon von der Bereitung zum Sterben* (*Sermon on Preparing to Die*), Martin Luther argues that fear is an improper emotion to feel at death, since it betrays a lack of belief in Christ’s conquest of sin and human suffering and in one’s own election. Instead of feeling contrition for sin, the dying should feel triumphant, directing attention only to Christ’s triumph over death; disassociating themselves from any sinners, living or dead, they should anticipate joining directly, with no interval for purgatory, the saints who are already with God. Luther’s revision of death preparation into a single focused cultivation of faith in Christ’s saving grace is directed toward alleviating fear born of worry regarding the proper interior experience of repentance, the spiritually advanced but debilitating fear that was a by-product of the antiformalist and perfectionist tendencies of fifteenth-century death manuals such as the *Craft of Dying*.

The desire to combat fear is also the focus of the death texts by Richard Whitford, Desiderius Erasmus, and Thomas Lupset, the most popular original artes moriendi to appear in print in English during the reign of Henry VIII. Each of these, first published in the 1530s, ran through more than one edition, and each offers itself as countering fear as the most common and crucial obstacle to dying a good death. Although they continue the earlier works’ interest in the relation between outer form and inner experience, however, these writers are less concerned with forms of perfectionist fear—fear of inadequate contrition or lack of passionate love of God—than with the basic and “natural” fear of physical death. These texts provide new models of death, ones that point to changes in London’s, and England’s, public political and religious culture. As Erasmus writes in the preface to *A Preparation to Death*, learning to die is enormously important, “for this is of mans lyfe the laft part (as it were) of the playe, wherof hangeth eyther everlastyng blysee of man, or everlastyng damnation.”³⁰ In all three texts discussed here, learning to die is presented for the first time as taking place not only in the domestic space of the household but in public view: as a spectacle scripted by a human author, not a divine one; a “playe” on a stage, watched by a strangers in a crowd, not a ritualized natural event in a sickbed.

Spiritual Governance and the Lay Household

The Visitation of the Sick

The Second Estate: Thomas Wimbleton's *Redde rationem*

“Alas, alas, þilke grete citee þat was cloped wip bisse [linen] and purple and brasile [dyed fabric] and overgilt wip gold and precious stones and perles. For in on hour alle þese grete richessis beþ distroied” (Revelation 3:16–17). Ðan shulleþ þey seye þat shulleþ be dampned wip hire [i.e., the city]: “We have erred fro þe wey of trewþe and of ryȝtfulnesse. Liȝt haþ not schyned to us, and þe sunne of undirstondyng haþ not rysen to us. We haveþ be maade wery in þe wey of wikkednesse and of loost [lust], and we haveþ go [gone] harde weyes. But þe wey of God we knewe not. What haþ pride profited to us, oþer [or] þe bost of oure richesse? What haþ it brouȝt to us? Al is go as a schadewe of deēþ, and we mowe [may] now schewe no tokene of holynesse; in oure wikkednesse we beþ wasted away” (Wisdom 8:6–13). Þynk þefore, I rede [advise], þat þou schalt ȝelde rekenyng [you must give an account] of þy balye [stewardship] (Luke 16:2).¹

So ends the first part of Thomas Wimbleton's celebrated *Redde rationem villicationis tue* (give an account of your stewardship: Luke 16:2), a sermon preached in 1388 at Paul's Cross in the churchyard of St. Paul's Cathedral, one of the largest open spaces within the city walls, before a mixed assemblage of Londoners, setting out the duties of the three estates, chastising them for their failures, and looking forward to the coming judgment.² The kingdom of heaven is like a “housholdyng man.” Christ assigns the work of the household to “pre offices: presthod, knyȝthod, and laboreris.” All three estates are intricately interdependent and none must fail, lest the household perish through “defaute [lack] of knowyng of Goddis lawe,” increase

of “peves and enemies,” or the “defaute of bodily sustenaunce” that follows when “bakeris ... makeris of cloth ... marchaundis,” and others do not do their work.³ Therefore “every staat [estate] shul [must] love oþer and men of o [one] craft shulde neiþer hate ne despise men of anoþer crafte,”⁴ while, at the judgment, all must give a “streyt rekenyng” to Christ, their householder, answering three questions of their governance or stewardship over others or themselves: “how hast þou entred? ... how hast þou reuled? ... how hast þou lyvyd?”⁵

Suddenly, however, it is as though the judgment is now. All the estates, “every curat and prelat of holy chirche,” “kynges, princys, maires, and schyrevys [sheriffs], and justices,” and “every Cristene man,” are summoned to the preacher’s rhetorical bar, where one sin over all is found to destroy the household of Christ: covetousness, the one sin so ravenous it “may not bee fulfillid.”⁶ This is the sin that prevents the old from repenting even when they know death “graunteþ no respit” but brings us “wiþouten dalay” to our reckoning.⁷ This is also the sin that must soon—perhaps as soon as 1400, “not fully twelve 3eer and an half lackynge,” according to one learned reader of “Abot Joachym” and “mayde Hildegare”—draw the world to its close.⁸ The opening of the Seven Seals is almost done; the opening of the great book of life that follows is at hand. “Loke þerfor now what þyng is writen in þe bok of þy conscience whyle þou art here. And 3if þou fyndest out [anything] contrarie to Cristis lif oþer to his techynge, wiþ þe knyf of penaunce and repentaunce scrape it away and write it beterer [better], evermore hertily þynkyng þat þou *schalt 3elde rekenyng of þy baylie*.”⁹ “For in what state so evere a mannes laste day fyndeþ hym when he goþ out of þis world, in þe same state he bryngeþ hym to his dom.”¹⁰

With its apocalyptic account of a city and a culture gone astray and its pointed criticism of the clergy in particular, “Wimbledon’s Sermon” was popular well into the early modern period, printed in a series of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century editions as evidence for the existence of an “enlightened but beleagured minority” of “proto-reformers” whom Protestants claimed had withstood the Church of Rome, prominent among them Thomas Wimbledon’s contemporary John Wyclif.¹¹ And indeed, although its theology has nothing distinctively Wycliffite about it, the sermon does speak in a powerful reformist voice to a city that felt itself beleaguered, not only by the ongoing debates over Wyclif’s radical proposals for church reform and the eschatological crisis of the schism but more locally by the factionalism, civic violence, and open revolt of the previous decade and the disciplinary actions Richard II had taken in response.¹² Wimbledon’s “men of o craft shulde neiþer hate ne despise men of

another crafte” evokes years of interguild competition and street fighting: a darker period for many of London’s citizens, including its governors, than they would see for another hundred years. Wimbledon’s apocalyptic language is biblical, of a piece with calls to reform and attacks on avarice all over Europe, while his social vocabulary is feudal, working within a communitarian ethics familiar from the great London poem of the previous decades, William Langland’s *Piers Plowman*, with its similar call to the estates to perform their duties, “ech lif to knowe his owene.”¹³ But the sermon’s prophetic judgment of a city engulfed by a desire for riches it can neither keep nor consume—“as þe licour in þe pot profiteþ not to þe pot [is of no use to the pot] but to men þat drawen and drynkeþ þerof, so worldly goodis ofte profiteþ not to chynchis [misers] but to opere þat comeþ aftir”¹⁴—at once speaks to the disturbances of the time and goes to the heart of the moral anxieties of a community to which profit, however suspect, was not only desirable but vital.

“Wimbledon’s Sermon” was also popular in the fifteenth century, surviving in two copies in Latin and seventeen English copies,¹⁵ including two of the “household miscellanies,” Oxford, University College MS 97 and London, British Library Harley MS 2398, that concern me later in this chapter.¹⁶ Produced in numbers during the first half of the fifteenth century and with contents that overlap in regular enough ways that Ralph Hanna has been able to outline a loose copying and distribution network, with London as its most likely axis,¹⁷ these books have attracted notice in the last few years for the evidence they offer of a devout lay-oriented reading culture—mainly focused around literate residents of London and other cities and members of the regional gentry, although also including secular priests—and more specifically, for this culture’s interest in themes and texts linked to Wycliffism.¹⁸ The inclusion in many of these books of texts of more or less Wycliffite emphasis, often rewritten in small ways to suit particular views—occasionally, as Stephen Kelly and Ryan Perry have shown, lightly censored¹⁹—are among the signs of how intensely such interest survived the suppression of organized Wycliffism by Archbishop Thomas Arundel and his successor, Henry Chichele, blending with the new kinds of reformism, imbued by the Council of Constance, at work in what Vincent Gillespie calls “Chichele’s Church.”²⁰

These lay books are typically organized around rather elaborate presentations of standard catechetical items, commentaries on the *Paternoster*, the Ten Commandments, and so on, but also include a varied array of other instructional and devotional materials. These latter might be spiritual treatises such as Richard Rolle’s *Ego dormio*, originally written for an anchoress, or the *Speculum ecclesie* by

Edmund of Canterbury, originally written for professional religious, but also instructional works more closely applicable to the elite laity, such as parts of the treatise on lay Christian living, *Pore Caitif*, or the *Schort Reule of Lif*, which outlines a daily regime for Christian living to members of the three estates, but pays most detailed attention to lords: those in authority over “wif ... childre ... homli meyne [household servants]” and “tenauntis,” that is, substantial property owners.²¹ All four works, along with a number of others addressed to “lords” or householders in this broad same sense, are found in London, Westminster School MS 3: a book that can be speculatively linked to the famous “common profit” scheme for the lay circulation of religious materials associated with the early fifteenth-century London stationer John Colop and that was owned in the 1470s by Richard Close, church warden in the parish of St. Mary at Hill, London.²² The *Schort Reule* in particular is a popular item, found in six other books, including two more with close London connections, Oxford, Bodleian Library MS 938, another book perhaps related to the “common profit” project, and University College 97, as well as Harley 2398.²³ With their mixed devotional, homiletic, and practical contents and their emphatic tilt toward the pastoral, lay books like these are expressive of the interests, aspirations, and spiritual responsibilities of two generations of privileged English laypeople.

Given its opening depiction of Christ as a “housholdynge man” and its direct appeals to those who exercise secular, as well as clerical, power, “Wimbledon’s Sermon” is in many ways a natural traveling companion of texts like the *Schort Reule*; indeed, many works included in the lay miscellanies may also date from the 1380s. All the same, to read the sermon from the viewpoint of the 1420s or 1430s, when many of these miscellanies were first circulating, and from a London viewpoint in particular, is to experience a certain disconnect, for a great deal had changed since the tense moment the sermon evokes so vividly. The apocalyptic year, 1400, had come and gone without the promised destruction, along with the worst of the religious and civic unrest that made Wimbledon’s sense of an imminent ending seem widely plausible. After weathering a royal regime change, a small but well-publicized series of heresy burnings, and more, London itself was not only in the midst of a building boom and cultural renaissance—some of its public spaces almost literally “overgilt wip gold and precious stones and perles”—but also, thanks to a financially weak and otherwise preoccupied monarchy, in a position of relative political independence that allowed its governors to think, if only for a few decades, in semirepublican terms of the city’s autonomy. This state of confidence, indeed, lies behind the civic context of all the materials discussed in this and the following two chapters of this

Most interestingly, from the viewpoint of the early fifteenth century, the sermon seems old-fashioned in its understanding of reform, which it hopes to effect through public controversy and change at a political and societal level, relying on its prophetic evocation of imminent apocalypse to induce its audience to repent more than it does on its account of the “special rekenynge” that follows each individual’s death,²⁵ and using the tactic of criticism of the clergy in the laity’s hearing that was soon to be outlawed; such criticism was explicitly forbidden in Arundel’s Constitutions of 1409.²⁶ Even though “Wimbledon’s Sermon” is itself found in two early fifteenth-century lay miscellanies, the contents of books such as University College 97 and Harley 2398 in general view reform differently: as a matter of individual moral education at all societal levels, beginning with deep lay study and practical implementation of catechesis, and demanding the energetic cooperation of educated laymen in particular. Polemic about the state of society or the clergy is not uncommon in these books. But reform here is usually less dramatic and more pastorally specific, its eschatological assumptions not so close to the surface, confined to general accounts of the separation of good and evil at the Last Judgment. The end times have receded and the hard grind of Christian teaching can resume.

More remarkably, however, these books have also heard a message that is only implicit in “Wimbledon’s Sermon” but developed as a standard topic of contemporary Wycliffite preaching, in which complaint about the sins of the clergy spills over into a call for secular rulers to take more control over, and responsibility for, the church.²⁷ In these books, secular governors not only have a legitimate interest in the moral life of society as a whole but are also expected to take on an expanded role of spiritual leadership over their families, their households, and all their “subjects.”

“Wimbledon’s Sermon” makes a firm and traditional separation between the duties of the first and second estates. Priests must answer to how they have “governed Goddis folk þat was taken þe to kepe”: “Seye whom þou haast turned from here cursid lyvyng by þy devout preching. Whom hast þou tawth þe lawe of God þat was arst unkunnyng [ignorant before]?” Secular rulers are asked how they have dealt justice—“how hast þou rewlið, þat is to seye þe peple and þe office þat þou haddist to governe?”²⁸ In these lay household books, this key distinction has become blurred, replaced by language suggestive of the imposition of a new burden of spiritual responsibility onto civic, estate, and household “lords,” the solemnity of which is captured by the title of a brief tract found in Westminster 3 and two other books: “How lordis and housbondemen schulden *teche goddis*

comaundementis and þe gospel to her suggettis *and answeze for hem to god on domesday*.”²⁹ Parents had always had responsibility for seeing to the spiritual education of children and godchildren. Here, however, “lordis and housbondemen” are called to account for the souls of these and potentially other “suggettis”—a term that could be given a very broad interpretation—in almost the same way as are priests. Clerical reform was one important goal of the early fifteenth-century English church, in the wake not only of the religious situation in England but of international events such as the Council of Constance. As it appears from books such as these, societal reform, spearheaded by powerful devout laymen and working within the household (in the most extended sense) as well as the parish, was another.

The new emphasis on the spiritual responsibility of the lay householder or *paterfamilias* is a central concern in the death text on which I focus in this chapter, now known as the *Visitation of the Sick*, version E, but in the manuscripts generally given the more expressive title “How men þat been in heele schulde visite seke folke.” A staple of early fifteenth-century vernacular books for the laity, *Visitation E* appears in all four such books mentioned already and others like them, and was clearly an integral part of the broad pastoral program we shall see they embody. First appearing near the end of the fourteenth century, the work is an expanded lay adaptation of the *Visitation A*, which was likely written around 1380 and remained in parallel circulation with its descendant, exclusively in manuscripts produced for priests, for perhaps a hundred years.

Neither *Visitation A* nor its descendant has been the object of much scholarly attention, outside Robert Kinpoitner’s thesis edition from the 1970s, which has not been published and is understandably now in need of updating.³⁰ Indeed, these works are not usually discussed as instantiations of a distinct text at all, but are presented as two of a series of aggregations of Latin deathbed materials that standard reference works refer to as versions A–F: confusingly so, in as much as *Visitation E* is a direct rewriting of *Visitation A*, whereas B, C, D, and F are separate translations of portions of A’s sources. Both works, however, deserve to be better known than they are, if only because they seem to be among the earliest developed vernacular artes moriendi extant from anywhere in northern Europe, predating by some twenty-five years both the works usually taken as the wellsprings of the late medieval ars moriendi discussed in [Chapter 4](#), Jean Gerson’s *De scientia mortis* and its descendant, *Tractatus de arte bene moriendi*. Representing a distinctly English outgrowth of a common European tradition, *Visitation A* and *E* are the first in a long line of such vernacular texts to appear over the next several hundred

Nor is this the only claim the texts have to importance. If at first glance *Visitation* A and E may look like little more than vernacular aids to the Latin rite, a closer inspection shows that, grounded as they are in texts and practices derived from the early twelfth century, they nonetheless are both responses to distinctively contemporary concerns. As we will see in the next section, *Visitation* A already shows how the standard ritual for the visitation of the sick and dying, or *Ordo ad visitandum infirmum*, as practiced across much of England according to the Sarum rite, had come by the end of the 1300s to be seen as requiring supplementation, in order to reflect changes in the understanding of the deathbed and to make better use of the pastoral possibilities of dying. Of a piece with the contemporary intensification of interest in the deathbed discussed in the Introduction and exemplified in texts such as Julian of Norwich's *Vision Showed to a Devout Woman*, *Visitation* A consolidates an understanding of deathbed practice that differs in several respects from the one presented by earlier versions of the *Ordo*, in particular by bringing the responses and attitudes of the dying person sharply to the fore.

A special feature, amounting almost to a genre marker, of early fifteenth-century texts for elite laypeople such as are found in Westminster 3, Bodley 938, and other books, is a double address in which the reader is expected at once to gain individual spiritual benefit as the object of a text's pastoral intentions and to use the text to teach others. As I argue in the third section of this chapter, such a double program is an important and, at first, somewhat confusing feature of *Visitation* E, which expands outward from its predecessor, in unsystematic fashion, in two directions at once. On the one hand, the new work adapts *Visitation* A in ways that render it of more practical value to a reader preparing to undergo the visitation ritual in sickness or dying or to teach others how to do so: as a work of *death preparation*, another testimony to the new urgencies associated with the occasion. On the other hand, the work also adapts the address of *Visitation* A in order to allow a lay reader to conduct a version of the ritual in his or her own right, imitating the role of the officiating priest. *Visitation* E appears to have been written in response to the new responsibilities that "lordis and housbondemen" were being urged to feel toward "suggettis," and shows these responsibilities in one of their most specific forms. One sign of this agenda already anticipated by *Visitation* A is that the sacramental parts of the death rite take a back seat to the exchanges between the officiant and the dying person. Although God, the Virgin, the saints, and all the angels are summoned to the death bed in prayer, the center of the rite as described in *Visitation* E is conversational and human.

An important supporting and symbolic part had long been played at the deathbed by the dying person's neighbors or "even-cristen," whose role as witnesses was understood to have both personal and communal values and who had always directly participated in the ritual at various levels. One way to think about the officiating role potentially attributed to laypeople in *Visitation E* is as an expansion of their former role as deathbed attendants, carrying out the work of mercy known as "visiting the sick" enjoined upon them in the gospels as necessary for their own salvation. Perhaps originally a practical consequence of a dearth of competent priests to officiate at deathbeds in the wake of the Black Death and its successors, the rise of the lay deathbed attendants to new positions of prominence is not confined to the *Visitation E* but is an equally marked feature of both Gerson's *De scientia mortis* and the *Tractatus de arte moriendi*.³² As we shall see in [Chapter 4](#), an ever more important role was played, as the fifteenth century wore on, by the presence at the deathbed not simply of lay attendants but of a principal assistant or master of ceremonies, the "friend."³³ Indeed, the seemingly sudden rise of the *ars moriendi* as an independent genre may have been as much a response to this widespread reconfiguration of the attendants' role at the deathbed as it was to an expansion of the part played by the dying person herself or himself.

For Julian of Norwich, who uses the deathbed topos of the "even-cristen" as a fluid way to move between her own, singular experience as the figure at the center of the drama and the experiences of Christians in general, the deathbed attendants function as they do in the *Ordo*, as a sign of the equality of all Christian souls in the face of death and of the private judgment that follows. The famous statement that defines one of the hermeneutic principles of her books, "Alle that I saye of myselfe, I meene in the persone of alle mine evencristene," relies on this topos.³⁴ Such equality is also presupposed, after a fashion, both by the estates satire of "Wimbledon's Sermon," with its injunction that "everey staat shul love oþer," and by the *Schort Reule*, with its final evocation of the "good lif, reste, pees, and charite ... among cristene men," if all dutifully perform the role in life they have been assigned.³⁵ The *Visitation E* also uses the "even-cristen" formula, along with other language of equality, to signal a similar inclusivity.

As an account of a ritual of instruction and exhortation, however, *Visitation E* is also a text about governance: the self-governance of the dying person and the governance of the dying person by the lay attendant. The last section of the chapter thus turns to consider the work in the context of the manuscripts in which it is found—particularly Harley 2398, a book written in Gloucestershire although it has close ties to two London books, Bodley 938 and Westminster 3

—and the wider representation of lay spiritual governance in these manuscripts. Several texts in these manuscripts articulate explicitly what *Visitation E* presents in action, that the “lordis and housbondemen” for whom these books were made must view their role in quasi-sacerdotal terms, even comparing their double spiritual duty (to their subjects and themselves) to the “mixed life” of action and contemplation shouldered by a bishop.

The Augustinian canon Walter Hilton, whose writings gradually became staple reading for fifteenth-century devout lay Londoners, wrote a brief treatise *On Mixed Life* in the 1380s or early '90s, in which he depicts the devout *habitus* of a secular lord as divided between the public exercise of secular lordship and a private life of affective devotion.³⁶ The lay mixed life depicted in the *Visitation E* and other works discussed in the last section overlaps with Hilton's influential account, and occasionally circulated in its vicinity. But it is still a different model, assigning real spiritual power to the secular lord, and thus breaching the division of roles between the first two estates as Hilton—in this respect like Wimbledon—is reluctant to do. *Visitation E*'s extension of elite lay authority into the spiritual realm thus offers us a point of entry not only into the role of death discourse in the exercise of governance in the household, broadly considered, but into the civic uses of this discourse, yet more firmly under lay control, to which we turn in [Chapter 2](#).

The *Ordo ad visitandum infirmum* and *Visitation A*

The liturgical *Ordo* for the sick and dying around which the *Visitation* texts are organized involved at least two sacraments and three distinct rituals, each with its own lengthy liturgical and textual history: the office of visitation itself, in which the priest carries the consecrated host to the sick person's house, with prayers for recovery; then two further offices for those who are not merely sick but dying or dead, final unction and commendation of the soul. The first, the *Ordo ad visitandum infirmum* proper, might be undertaken by a priest more than once on his pastoral visits to provide spiritual aids for the seriously ill. If a sick person, having failed to recover, seemed to be dying, the entire, extended sequence would be performed, with the celebration of communion taking on the name of *viaticum* and the final section, the commendation, being said at the moment of death. The three sections appear more or less in their final conjoined form and order by the thirteenth century, surviving in manuals from each of England's major liturgies, Sarum, Hereford, Bangor, and York. However, even before this and other occasional liturgical offices were

brought into larger manuals like these during the twelfth century, independently circulating Latin rituals for the sick included nearly the same units.³⁷

One feature of the ritual in a number of early manuscripts that anticipates its much later paraliturgical development in the *Visitation of the Sick* and other artes moriendi is its use of the vernacular. In several eleventh-century books, the rubrics of the *Ordo*, and a few other passages, are in Old English, a language whose liturgical uses were generally reserved for a small set of rituals in which comprehension of the words uttered was especially crucial: excommunication, confession, penance, and portions of the baptismal rite. Unusually, most of the Old English in these early *Ordo* manuscripts is directed at the priest, clarifying the actions to be performed and inner attitudes to be assumed as the ritual proceeds if it is to have efficacy—another reminder of the urgency of the death rite even before the pastoral reforms of the early thirteenth century and the importance attributed to the details of its performance.³⁸ Occasionally, however, the vernacular is used in the prayers, at those critical moments where, as David Dumville notes, “it was necessary for the unlatinate ... to participate more fully”—that is, comprehendingly—in spoken rather than merely physical aspects of the liturgy.”³⁹ At such moments, we can already sense the presence not only of the priest and his dying charge but of the deathbed attendants: participants in the rite who, as souls in need of their own salvation, are also objects of its message of exhortation and comfort.

In the post-Conquest English liturgy, the “casual bilingualism” of these incursions of the vernacular into the domain of Latin occurs only in the baptism and marriage rites in which the non-Latinate directly participate, giving prescribed answers to prescribed questions⁴⁰—although priests’ books from the twelfth and thirteenth centuries containing occasional offices like those associated with the visitation ritual are so rare this may not be of much significance.⁴¹ However, even if these Old English prayers and rubrics are further evidence of what Mechthild Gretsch describes as a specifically Anglo-Saxon “confidence in the potential of the vernacular to be developed as a medium for scholarly and religious discourse on a par with Latin,”⁴² they clearly anticipate the larger-scale attempts to supplement the *Ordo ad visitandum infirmum* with vernacular prayers and exhortations, with the deathbed witnesses as well as the dying person increasingly explicitly in mind, from the last decades of the fourteenth century onward.

Two centuries after the *Ordo ad visitandum infirmum* reached its developed form, a full vernacular written text emerged to serve as a paratext to the Latin rite. Appearing for the first time in books copied

in the late fourteenth century, the two versions of the *Visitation of the Sick* survive in nineteen manuscripts, the majority produced within the period 1380–1450.⁴³ Of the six surviving manuscripts of the shorter A version of this text, almost all can be linked with clerics or religious, appearing with the *Ordo* itself or with homiletic and pastoral works in Latin and Middle English relevant to their professional duties. In Oxford, St. John's College MS 47, for example, donated to the college library by Richard Butler, an early seventeenth-century archdeacon of Northampton, the work is the sole vernacular text in a collection of occasional offices of Sarum Use designed, like several other *Visitation A* books, for portability and use.⁴⁴

Visitation A offers a flexible text to guide and shape the events at a sick or dying person's bedside. Made up of discrete sections, including homiletic exhortations, an examination of faith, and passages of general spiritual comfort, the work signals through rubrics what can be left out and what must be read if the sick person is near death. Although parts of it are original, the text itself is loosely based on two early twelfth-century sources, both produced less than a century after many of the Anglo-Saxon *Ordo* manuscripts containing Old English: the epistolary treatise *De visitacione infirmorum*, often ascribed in the Middle Ages to Augustine, which has the distinction of being the earliest nonliturgical treatment of death and dying to attain any wide European influence;⁴⁵ and the very brief *Admonitio morienti*, a set of catechetical questions and exhortations to the dying person originally from the same period that circulated widely in England and elsewhere, often under the name of Anselm.

Long unattributed, the main source of the *Visitation*, the pseudo-Augustinian *De visitacione infirmorum*, is now known to be the only religious prose work—written in two parts as letters to a gravely ill nephew—by the humanist poet Baudri de Bourgueil (1045/6–1130), abbot of the monastery of Saint-Pierre-de-Bourgueil in Brittany and, later, archbishop of Dol.⁴⁶ Baudri's 256 surviving poems experiment with a wide range of classical forms, including satires, lyrics, meditations, epigrams and epitaphs, and epistles on secular and religious topics, and are often associated with the contemporary poets of the Loire school, Marbod of Rennes, Hildebert of Lavardin, and Godefroid of Reims. Taking Horace, Virgil, Martial, and, especially, Ovid, as his models, Baudri wrote (according to Winthrop Wetherbee) for the “new, urban-courtly culture of the period,” providing sophisticated reading for the literati of his day and aggressively arguing the claims of Latinity.⁴⁷ As the synthesis of stylistic elegance, worldly engagement, and piety in *De visitacione infirmorum* itself implies, his secular concerns were also compatible with an intensely felt and up-to-date religiosity. But the scattering of quotations from

the Stoics and the high-style exhortations or prayers borrowed from the work in the *Visitation of the Sick* suggest that his Middle English translator in part valued his writing for its distinctive note of elegiac, neoclassical humanism. This is our earliest sign of the link between the theme of mortality and classical philosophical rhetoric we will notice repeatedly during the course of this book.

The first part of *De visitacione* is a three-thousand word consolation treatise carefully attuned to the needs of the ill for emotional direction and succinct theological contextualization of their experience. After expressing Baudri's sorrow at his nephew's illness ([chapter 1](#)), the work opens with a set of consoling exhortative images that anticipate the moment at which the soul is to be "placed as a living rock" in the silent walls of the heavenly Jerusalem ([chapter 2](#)).⁴⁸ Confession and the "hammer of penitence" provide a necessary preparation for entry into heaven,⁴⁹ as do works of bodily mercy, almsgiving, the ordering of charity, and tribulation, whether in the form of bodily sickness or worldly persecution ([chapters 3–4](#)). Illness, tribulation, and death itself are to be welcomed as God's loving chastisement and an opportunity for patience and expiation of sin—for God's mercy, "as though unjust" ("quasi injusta"), allows the soul time to prepare for death and does not take vengeance for sins ([chapters 6, 5](#)). The letter ends with a "prayer of the one about to die" ("oratio morituri") in the voice of the dying ([chapter 7](#)).⁵⁰

Despite their epistolary intimacy, these chapters, which introduce many of the standard death topoi we will encounter over the next five chapters, were evidently written for a wider audience and context than the immediate one they evoke.⁵¹ The work's second section, while still in theory written to the nephew, thus turns to address a wider community of professional religious colleagues in their capacity as deathbed officiants, instructing them in such matters as the correct use of and attitude to the crucifix in focusing the dying's devotion, the importance of faith in reflection on such theological mysteries as the doctrine of the Trinity, and the need to administer the sacraments in full to the dying and, in particular, for the dying person to make her or his confession to a priest.⁵² Although *Visitation A* directly translates only from the more personal first part, these broader topics have a close bearing on the rituals for the dying found in the *Ordo* and assumed by the *Visitation*, and go far to explain the popularity of Baudri's text in later medieval England. Insular catalogues and booklists attest to at least two dozen copies of the work (always attributed to Augustine), not only in monastic but in canonical and, by the fourteenth century, collegial contexts.⁵³ As well as *Visitation A* and *E*, there are two early fifteenth-century Middle English translations of short portions of the work.⁵⁴ As appears also to have been the case in

Germany, it would seem that from the thirteenth century on, Baudri's Latin text was used to help people die both in religious houses and in hospitals, great houses, and, very likely, parishes.⁵⁵ While the *Visitation of the Sick* introduces the *De visitacione* into a still wider range of social contexts, whoever wrote the vernacular work was part of a textual community in which the general utility of its Latin source was already well established.

The other main source of *Visitation A* is the *Admonitio morienti*, also known by the extended title *Admonitio morienti et de peccatis suis nimium formidanti* (Admonition to the dying person not to be too terrified of his sins): a series of questions to ask of a dying person and urgent instructions to assist his or her soul as the person dies and to keep him or her from despair. This short, brilliantly pithy work, very different in its urgency from the *De visitacione infirmorum*, circulated widely across Europe, usually under the name of St. Anselm, who may indeed have written its first version;⁵⁶ besides inspiring the influential new "interrogations" in Gerson's *De scientia mortis*, for example, it is included in its entirety, under Anselm's name, in the *Tractatus de arte bene moriendi*.⁵⁷ The survival of several Middle English translations of the work—as well as a Latin version in the "Harley Lyrics" manuscript, London, British Library Harley MS 2253—suggests that by the second half of the fourteenth century it was in common use at insular deathbeds too.⁵⁸ These versions include two prose texts, one of which survives in six manuscripts erroneously described as versions of the *Visitation*,⁵⁹ a brief verse version inserted into the instructions for the ritual of visitation in John Mirk's *Instructions for Parish Priests*, and another poem purporting to be derived from the work by the early fifteenth-century Augustinian canon John Audelay.⁶⁰ The same questions again ascribed to Anselm also appear in English versions of the *Tractatus de arte bene moriendi*, namely *The Book of the Craft of Dying* and William Caxton's *Art and Craft to Know Well to Die* and *Ars moriendi* (1490, 1491).⁶¹ While the production of a vernacular paratext to the *Ordo* represents a major development in late medieval English death practices, it is again clear that the author-compiler of the work was drawing on material whose value at the deathbed was well established.

As an "occasional office," whose manuscript circulation was not confined to large liturgical books, the visitation rite outlined in the *Ordo ad visitandum infirmum* continues throughout the late Middle Ages to vary from diocesan use to use in England and even within individual uses: the sixteenth-century printed versions of the Sarum Use rite, for example, are considerably more elaborate than the early fifteenth-century version found in one of the oldest *Visitation A*

manuscripts, Oxford, St. John's College MS 47.⁶² In general terms, however, the rite begins with a procession to the sick person's house, led by the priest, who carries the reserved host in a pyx as he sings the seven penitential psalms, walking behind two altar boys, one of whom holds a cross while the other rings a bell to tell passers-by that they must either join the procession or, as John Mirk instructs, "knele adowne" "wyth grete devocyone," as "Goddes body" is borne by.⁶³ Those who arrive at the house with the priest join those already there to form the community of "even-cristen" presupposed in what follows.

The priest enters the house with the words "peace to this house and to all who live here, peace to those who come in and go out," asperging the room with holy water, then prays to God for healing, invoking biblical miracles such as the healing of "Peter's mother in law, the centurion's boy, and Tobias and Sara":⁶⁴ partly in hope of recovery, partly in memory of the more common earlier uses of the rite to minister to the sick who were not thought to be dying. The cross brought from the church is held in front of the sick person; as he does this, Julian of Norwich's "curette" reportedly utters the memorable "Doughter, I have brought the [you] the image of thy savioure. Loke thereopon, and comforthe the therewith in reverence of him that diede for the and me."⁶⁵ Meanwhile, the rite of unction (anointing of the sick person's body with oil) is administered, followed (after the sick person has undergone the sacrament of confession) by communion.

After more prayers, if the sick person is dying, the great litany is then said in order to invoke the whole company of heaven to accompany the departing soul to its rest:

Go, Christian soul, from this world: in the name of God the Father who created thee. Amen. In the name of Jesus Christ his son, who suffered for thee. Amen. In the name of the Holy Spirit, who was poured out into thee. Amen. In the name of Angels and Archangels. Amen. In the name of Thrones and Dominations. Amen. In the name of Princedoms and of Powers and of all heavenly Virtues. Amen. In the name of Cherubim and Seraphim. Amen. In the name of Patriarchs and Prophets. Amen. In the name of Apostles and Martyrs. Amen. In the name of Confessors and Bishops. Amen. In the name of Priests and Levites, and of all the orders of the Catholic church. Amen.⁶⁶

The soul gone, there are prayers to offer to speed it on its way and the body to tend to. Thus follows the commendation, the last part of the rite to take place in the house, after which the body is removed, the rite ends, and the new rites of requiem and burial in due time begin.

This decorous ideal ritual, complete with psalms, antiphons, versicles, and responses, must always have been particularly susceptible to interruption and adaptation in practice, from the

moment it enters the domestic space where the person who occasions the ritual lies dying. Death may be too sudden for the ritual to be performed in its entirety; the dying person may not be able to say the “amens” required in the benedictions that follow anointing; confession may not be possible to perform, unction and communion to bestow. Or death may be delayed, interrupting the ritual to the point that it must be resumed or repeated later; this appears to have happened to Julian in her own brush with death, when, after taking “alle my rightinges of haly kyrke,” she remained ill for three more days, until she and “thaye that were with me” believed her death had come and summoned the priest again.⁶⁷ Either way, the dying person will need comfort and may need instruction and exhortation until the very end. What is more, unction and communion both ritually require the sick person to be in an appropriate spiritual state, at peace with God and neighbor. The St. John’s 47 version of the rite acknowledges this requirement with the rubric: “These things [the prayers for recovery] once said, before the sick person is anointed or given communion the priest should question him as to the manner of his belief in God and if he acknowledges the body and blood of our lord Jesus Christ; after that, he should confess and be absolved of his sins. This done, let him kiss the cross, then the priest, and then every one else, in order.”⁶⁸ Before the sacramental part of the ceremony begins, the rite thus calls for affirmation of the state of the dying person’s faith. However, neither in this nor in the other, less formal areas implied or mentioned in the rite does this version of the *Ordo* offer any script for the priest’s words or actions.

Visitation A fills these gaps in the *Ordo*’s representation of the deathbed at a time when the parts of the rite related to them were coming to seem especially significant. The work is not explicitly organized around the *Ordo*, and it is not always clear at what points in the rite the four exhortations and interrogations of which *Visitation A* consists are to be said. This may be deliberate, given the fluidity of the rite itself. However, in three of its six manuscripts *Visitation A* is interleaved with the *Ordo* (in Oxford, Bodleian Library Ashmole MS 750), immediately follows it (in Cambridge, Gonville and Caius College MS 209), or is appended to a collection of occasional offices that include it (in St. John’s 47). Such arrangements leave no doubt that it was actually used in conjunction with the rite. Indeed, it is possible, at least in general terms, to reconstruct how this might have worked in practice.

The opening exhortation, which assumes the possibility that the sick person may live and is largely an invitation to confession and penance (“And therfor I counsail the þat þu schrive the clene [make a clean confession] & make the redi”), is presumably to be said “before

the sick person is anointed or given communion,” as the rubric in St. John’s 47 has it, although *Visitation A* makes no mention of the Eucharist and delays enquiring into “the manner of his belief in God” until a later moment. The note struck here and sustained throughout is of humane confidence. The exhortation takes up Baudri’s image of the stone in the wall of Jerusalem to offer the dying person an image of spiritual stability and heavenly reward as though both are all but certain:

My dere sone in God, þou hiest [are going] fast thi wai to Godward [towards God]. There thou shalt see alle thi former faderis, apostils, martiris, confessoris, virginis, & alle men & wommen that be sauid. And þerfor be of gode confort in God. And thou must leyn [lay] a ston in the wal of cite of hevene witouten ani noise or strif. And therfor, ar [before] thou wenden out of this world, thou must make thi ston redi, & than shalt þu nouȝt be lette [hindered]. The ston is thi soule wiche thou makest clene. The noise that þu must make here is the thinking [recollection] of thi sinne wyche thou must telle the prest. The stroke is penaunce that thou shalt be sori for thi sinne & smithe [smite] thiself on thi brest & whan thou hast made redi thus thi ston, than may thou go thi wai in God & lai thi ston sykerlic [securely] withoute noise in the cite of hevene & therfor I counsaill the þat þou schrive the clene & make the redi.⁶⁹

Confession may lead to healing, since sickness can be caused by sin. Whether or not it does, the time to confess is now, both for the dying person and for the “even-cristen” around the bed, who are included in the exhortation as they prepare their own deaths by watching another’s: “And this is nouȝt only to seke men, but also to hole, for everi dai a man nehieth [nears] his deth ner [nearer] & ner.”⁷⁰

Once it is clear that “his sekenes aslake nouȝt,” the sick person receives one or both of two further exhortations, both expansions of passages of Baudri: one so that “he grucche nouȝt whan he is seke,” the other, to be given “ȝif a man be nie [near] the dethe,” to urge him to embrace his death, longing for it with all his soul.⁷¹ The first offers a standard array of verbal “comfort” for those in tribulation, noting that “sekenes of God is hele to the soule” if, and only if, it is endured patiently, when it serves to lessen time in purgatory.⁷² In passages added to the source and appropriate to the ritual’s lay, domestic setting, *Visitation A* emphasizes that, in “chastising” his “child,” God does what “a man” who sees “anotheris child do schreudeli [behaving naughtily] in his fader presence” would expect any father to do, if “he were his child or ellis loved him.”⁷³ God’s “chastising” is, in any, case, merciful, as though a “king to whom thou hast be tretour [traitor]” should decide to punish not with death but with a brief spell in the “esi prison” of “a litul sekenes here.”⁷⁴ Sickness and death are directly

analogous to the instruments of household and political discipline. The second attempts to activate the dying person's *contemptus mundi*—quoting Cato and “these olde filosofhurs” on the “wickidnes of this world”—and to create an identification with the dying words of Paul and Augustine: “A thou deth, end of alle wickidnes, thou deth, end of travail, beginning of ese & alle joie, what man mai bethenke [consider] the profitis & the blisses that thou bringest with the. Thou are desiriful to me, for a Cristin man may nouȝt evil die, but wel die, and lif wit Criste.”⁷⁵ Although the *Ordo* leaves no very obvious space for them, these two exhortations perhaps ideally take place after the sacramental part of the rite and before the litany: a period of indefinite extension, when later versions of the *Ordo* offer optional prayers to be said by or for the sick person.⁷⁶

The final exhortation, initially based on the Anselmian *Admonitio*, also fits into this open-ended moment, said either after the third exhortation is complete, “whan thou hast told him alle this,” or if need be, “ȝif thou have no time to sai alle for hast of death,” interrupting it “whan thou seest that he neieth the death.”⁷⁷ Here the examination deferred from earlier (the Anselm questions) is inserted at the very moment the ability of the sick person to answer is failing, allowing credal affirmation and prayer to be the last rational responses that the person makes:

Brother, art thou glad that thou shalt die in Cristin feith?

Responsio. ȝe.

Knowleche that thou has nouȝt wel lived as thou shuldest?

Responsio. ȝe.

Art thou sori therfor?

Responsio. ȝe.

Hast thou wil to amend the ȝif [if] thou haddist space of lif?

Responsio. ȝe.

Levist thou in God, Fader Almighty, maker of heuene & of erthe?

Responsio. ȝe.⁷⁸

Working through only the most important articles of the faith in the shortest possible form—using a series of questions adapted from baptism rites—the examination quickly moves on to its most urgent topic: the need to surrender the self to the vision of the cross (still being held in front of the dying person according to the *Ordo*), and to embrace not the idea of death in general but the possibility of salvation through self-abandonment to Christ's death in particular.

In this final passage, the priest quietly shifts from second-person

exhortation to first-person prayer, gradually speaking as though in the voice of the dying, in a long closing passage that moves between the *Admonitio* and Baudri, drawing on the different registers of each:

Tunc dicat sacerdos. [Anselm] Wil thi soule is in thi bodi, put alle thi trust in his passion & in his deth, & thenke onli theron & on non other thing. With his deth medil the [mingle yourself] & wrappe the therinne, nouȝt thinking on thi wif, ne on thi children, ne on thi rychesse, but al on the passion of Crist; [Baudri] & have the crosse tofore the [before you] & sai thus: I wot [know] wel thou art nouȝt my God, but thou art imagedn after him [in his likeness] & makest me have more minde of him after whom thou art imagedn. [Anselm] Lord, Fader of hevene, the deth of Oure Lord, Jhesu Crist, thi Sone, wiche is here imagedn, I set betwene the & my evil dedis, & the desert [merit] of Jhesu Crist I offre for that [what] I shuld have deservid & have nouȝt.... Into thi handes, Lord, I betake [commend] my soule.... [Baudri] I trust nouȝt on my dedis, but despeir of heme, save ȝit [except that] I trust more on thi merciis than in the despeir of my wicked dedes. Thou are my hope. Thou art my God.... I come & knoueleche to [acknowledge] the. I beseche the of merci, wiche deniest to no man merci.⁷⁹

An insider witness to the interactions between the *Ordo* and a text like *Visitation A* here is again provided by Julian of Norwich, who in dying “sette mine eyen in the face of the crucifixe” as instructed by the priest, finding “alle that was beside the crosse ... huglye to me, as if it hadde bene mekille occupiede with fendes,” and whose ensuing revelation begins as Anselm’s “with his deth medil the, & wrappe the therinne” still sounds in her ears.⁸⁰ After this exhortation, the ritual then reverts to the *Ordo* litany, perhaps begun as the dying person loses consciousness, followed by the commendation.

Visitation A is thus a powerful aid to and augmentation of the *Ordo*, taking charge of the moments in the rite that were hardest to script by providing the adaptable, affective, and, above all, vernacular materials necessary to their performance. (Later versions of the Sarum rite *Ordo ad visitandum infirmum* responded, incorporating their own exhortations and interrogations in Latin.)⁸¹

Yet by taking these same moments so seriously, the text also signals both a new intensity around the rite of visitation and a shift in its balance, one anticipated by earlier uses of Baudri’s *De visitacione* and Anselm’s *Admonitio*, but only here encapsulated in a paraliturgical text in the vernacular.

In the *Ordo*, salvation is imagined taking place almost solely through the Sacraments and the intercessions of the priest, joined in a limited way by the attendants and relying, on the part of the dying person, only on acquiescence, except for confession. By offering the same weight to instruction and exhortation that the *Ordo* gives the

sacraments and the litany, *Visitation A* engages the attendants through a series of pastoral discourses, and also asks the dying layperson to participate directly, throughout the rite, in the process of salvation, as her or his inner responses to dying are molded by the text into a proper attitude of passionate abandonment to Christ. As it is a dependent text that relies on the *Ordo* for its legitimacy, it is not true to say that *Visitation A* downgrades the sacraments. Nonetheless, the focus of the *Ordo* once *Visitation A* has been made part of the rite is likely not to be confession, absolution, unction, or communion but the cross and the inner response on the part of the dying person it is meant to evoke. More than a passive recipient of the church's sacraments and beneficiary of the prayers offered by the priest to the court of heaven and a merciful God, the dying layperson has become an actant in the spiritual drama.

Visiting the Sick: *Visitation E* and the Works of Mercy

Clearly initially intended for priests, the vernacular guide to deathbed pastoral care that is *Visitation A* is reflective of the same intensification of thinking about death we see at work in the writings of Julian of Norwich. Yet even though its use of the vernacular shifts the relationship between the dying person, the “evencristen” onlookers, and the rite, *Visitation A* only begins to respond to one key component of the wider cultural change it embodies: the transformation of specifically *lay* engagement in, and authority over, the deathbed. To gain a fuller sense of this transformation, we need to turn now to one of the works most directly implicated in it. This is *Visitation E*, a major rewriting of *Visitation A* carried out soon after the latter's composition, and closely connected with London, whether or not it was written there. Although one of two early copies, the *Piers Plowman* manuscript Cambridge University Library MS Dd.1.17, is from York, the other, University College 97, seems to have been copied in London by William Counter (a clerk of Sir William Beauchamp with later connections to the Worcester area) as one of several roughly contemporary copies with metropolitan connections. Both these books date from around 1400 or earlier, the same period as the first manuscripts of *Visitation A*.⁸²

Considerably more complex than *Visitation A* and double its length, *Visitation E* rapidly carved out a distinctive place for itself during the first few decades of the fifteenth century, when the popularity of the *Visitation* group was at its height. Where manuscripts of *Visitation A* all show signs of religious ownership and paraliturgical use, none of the thirteen manuscripts of *Visitation E* contain liturgical materials, and

about half are what I earlier called “lay household books”: religious miscellanies the bulk of whose texts, catechetical and otherwise, were written for direct lay consumption.⁸³ To read this companion work with one eye on its relationship to its source, the other on the works that traveled with it, is to see the shift toward lay involvement that in *Visitation A* affects only the dying person taken a stage further. It is also to recognize a powerful engine of transformation within the rite for the dying itself: the presence of deathbed attendants, fulfilling their own spiritual responsibility to themselves and to their “even-cristen” by carrying out one of the most important of the works of bodily mercy, the visitation of the sick.

Although it was never ritually codified, the lay practice of visiting the sick was at least as old as the ecclesiastical death rite: indeed, like the *Ordo ad visitandum infirmum*, it was derived directly from Scripture. For Jesus in Matthew 25, the “corporeal works of mercy,” those repeated acts of generosity toward the needy neighbor, are both essential to and sufficient for salvation: the sole criterion that he will use in separating the saved sheep from the damned goats when he returns to judge the world on the Last Day. Visiting the sick is the same as visiting Christ himself: “Come 3e, the blessid of my fadir, take 3e in possessioun the kyngdoom maad redi to 3ou fro the makynge of the world. For Y hungride, and 3e 3aven [gave] me to ete; Y thristide, and 3e 3aven me to drynke; Y was herborneles [shelterless], and 3e herboriden me; nakid, and 3e hiliden me; siik, and 3e visitiden me; Y was in prisoun, and 3e camen to me.”⁸⁴ According to Thomas Aquinas, the seven works of mercy—the seventh, not mentioned by Christ, is burial of the dead—are not only forms of almsgiving (“alms” indeed derives from Greek *elenmosyne*, mercy) but works of *justice*, and thus intrinsically relevant to secular rulers in particular.⁸⁵

As a specifically secular set of practices, more easily exercised by the laity than by those in contemplative life, the works of mercy were a key theme in late medieval pastoral writing, from the catechetical works grounded in Archbishop John Pecham’s Syllabus of 1281, which lists them among the truths all Christians should know, to Langland’s *Piers Plowman*, where they feature in accounts of saving charity, particularly when the spiritual destiny of urban merchants is under scrutiny. Among much else, merchants are advised to “amend mesondieus” with their profit “and myseisē folk helpe” if they wish to be saved.⁸⁶ In more than one manuscript, *Visitation E* itself travels with “Þese ben þe sevene dedes of mercy gostly,” a brief tract that opens by explicitly invoking the judgment scene depicted in Matthew 25 (“Of þe dedes of mercy god wole speke at þe day of dome to alle on his riȝt side”), outlining the deeds of bodily mercy before giving them a second, spiritual interpretation.⁸⁷ As I show in the next chapter, caring

for the sick and dying had an especially close relation to the works of mercy, inasmuch as these acts of charity were of pressing concern not only to the living but to the dying, as they disposed of their worldly assets with an eye, in part, to their own salvation.⁸⁸

The lay practice of visiting the sick had long been intertwined with its relative, the ecclesiastical *Ordo*, which assumes the presence of lay attendants, some of whom are assisting at the deathbed from the start while others enter the house of the dying with the priest, gathered up as he processes through the town with cross, handbell, and Eucharistic host. In the vernacular pastoral writings of the late fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, however, accounts of the practice independent of the rite began to multiply, both as a result of its inclusion as a primary item of catechesis, as Pecham's Syllabus was accepted as a normative guide to pastoral teaching, and as part of the new attention paid, across a range of texts, to all the works of the active religious life. In certain vernacular works with radical reformist and perhaps Wycliffite leanings, such as *The Fyve Wyttes*, the practice appears almost to substitute for the rite, as the presence of the priest at the deathbed recedes into the background and the lay attendant takes on a quasi-sacerdotal role. At once a product and a catalyst of this development, *Visitation E* offers an ideal vantage point from which to study it in detail, for the work scripts a version of the visitation rite in which the laity participate so thoroughly that ecclesiastical rite and lay spiritual practice almost fuse.

The clearest sign that *Visitation E* is a repurposing of *Visitation A* for lay users is that the work serves a double generic function and addresses a double audience—or a single audience with two potential relationships to the text. As with *Visitation A*, much of the work is presented as a practical script for a deathbed performance, although here the dying person tends to be a “brother or suster,” not the “sone” addressed by the priestly speaker of the *A* version.⁸⁹ *Visitation E* follows *Visitation A* closely enough that it could still in theory be used by a priest to supplement the *Ordo*. But unlike *Visitation A*, the work also asks to be received both as a reconstruction of the deathbed for a lay reader anticipating sickness and as a moral exhortation of such a reader while undergoing it. One of the reviser's concerns was to help readers to prepare for their own deaths, using the text to help them occupy the place of the dying in advance or prepare themselves in old age or sickness. Readers of *Visitation E* are asked to anticipate the moment at which they must become recipients of the liturgical rite and lay practice of visitation.

Thus where in *Visitation A* the second, more urgent set of exhortations is introduced by an instruction to the priest—“perfor if

his sekenes aslake nouȝt [does not lessen], thou shalt confort him on this maner”—in *Visitation E* the equivalent passage addresses the sick reader directly—“Therefore, ȝef þi peynes slake not, comforte the [yourself] in god in this manere”—as though inviting readers to minister to themselves, outside the ritual context of the *Ordo*.⁹⁰ Where *Visitation A* ends with a succinct prayer spoken by the priest on behalf of the dying, *Visitation E* substitutes a longer inner monologue, voiced aloud or “in þi herte” by the dying and often reminiscent of the *Ordo*, as the priest’s voice fades away with the rest of the world and the dying person is left alone with the cross:

And lord al myghty Jhesu Crist, sitthe thyn hooly gospel witnesseth þat þou wolt nought the deeth of synful man but that he bee turnyd from synne and lyve (Ezekiel 18:32), have mercy of me synful wrecche, after thi woord, and as þou blamedest Symount for he hadde indignacioun þat Marie magdeleyne for hir synnes schulde neighe the, have mercy of me moost synful, and lord Jhesu as þou clepedist [called] Zachee and Poul and oothere diverse from here [their] synes, dispise nought me þat come to the wilfulliche [voluntarily] wyth-owten suche clepeynge.... For I knowleche [acknowledge] þat I may not helpe my-self ne aȝeyn-bugge me [redeem myself] with my dedys: but stedefastliche I truste in thi passioun, that it suffiseth to make ful asseth [satisfaction] to þe fadir of hevene for my synnes.⁹¹

Like the shorter speech in *Visitation A*, this rhetorically poised and syntactically rich prayer, which takes up one sixth of the whole work, could in practice be spoken for the dying by a priest or attendant, but perhaps makes most sense as a script for a meditative rehearsal of death.

One purpose of this elaborate revision of *Visitation A* therefore seems to have been to transform a priest’s paraliturgical aid into a treatise suitable for private or household reading, with the deathbed scene acting as a point of focus, obliging readers to entertain the thought of their own deaths and the conversion it invites. “And therfore I counseile þe in þis lyf þat þou schryve the cleene to god and make þe redy,” declares the narrator, expanding the only passage *Visitation A* addresses to the attendants and presenting one of the work’s programs in the process.⁹²

But this is not the only concern of *Visitation E*. If one set of adaptations to *Visitation A* pulls the work toward homiletic meditation, another set serves to sustain the earlier text’s practical engagement with the actuality of the deathbed while moving the work away from its intricate connection with the *Ordo* toward the wider spiritual practice of visiting the sick. The opening rubrics of various copies of the text give it the title “How men þat been in heele [in health] schulde visite seeke folke,” indicating the new, more

generalized emphasis. A later rubric, placed after the instruction to “comforte the in God on þis manere,” introduces the following homily on patience with the rubric “how a man schulde comforte another þat he grucche [complain] not whanne he is seeke.”⁹³ In some cases following *Visitation A*, in others independent, rubrics to successive sections of the work point readers to identification not with the dying but with the role of the priest: “Whan thowe hast tolde hym alle this, or ellys 3ef þou myght not for hast of deeth: bygynne heere eer [before] his mynde goo [goes] from hym.”⁹⁴ In this instantiation, the text addresses itself to anyone who may be required to console the seriously ill and needs sound material to draw on. Generalizing the ecclesiastical visitation rite by returning it to its biblical source among the works of mercy, the text also now potentially supplants key aspects of the ecclesiastical rite.

The deliberate character of this shift from liturgical rite to spiritual practice and from priestly officiant to lay ministers becomes clearer when we consider the portions of *Visitation E* that deal directly with the sacraments and the priests who administer them. In *Visitation A*, the sacraments are rarely mentioned, since the text is designed for use in conjunction with the *Ordo*. Only in its first exhortation does the work explicitly enjoin confession to a priest, elaborating Baudri’s image of the soul-stone the dying one will lay in the walls around the heavenly city by allegorizing confession and penance as the hammer blows involved in forging and polishing the stone to make it “clene” for its new purpose. *Visitation E* modifies and elaborates this passage in ways that shift the balance of power and responsibility in play at the deathbed. In the quotation below, *italics* indicate *Visitation E*’s expansion of its source, **bold** a major substitution:

The noyse þat þou most [must] make heere *in worchynge of this stoon*, is ofte for-thynkyng [repenting] of þi synne, whiche þou most **knowleche to god** knowynge the gilty, *and ther-after it is profitable to þe to have conseil of trewe preestes the whiche owen [ought] to blesse the poeple, tellynge hem that ben sorwful for here synnes that þei schullen thorough goddis mercy been asoylid of hem [absolved of them].* The strokere [pumice] *wherewith þou slykest [smoothes] this stoon is verrey [true]* **repentaunce** þat þou schalt have in *thyn herte sorwyng of þi synne, smytyng thi-self on þe brest with greete sighyng of sorwe and stedefast wil to turne no moore a3eyne to synne.* And whan þou hast maad redy þus thi stoon, þat is thi sowle, thanne myght þou go the redy way to god, and legge [lay] þi stoon sykerliche [securely] with-owten noyful noyse in þe citee of hevene. And therfore I conseile þe in þis lyf þat þou schryve the cleene *to God* and make þe redy.⁹⁵

By replacing “telle the prest” with “knowleche to God” as it begins to expand *Visitation A*’s advice here, *Visitation E* changes both the occasion of the discourse and the role of the priest. In *Visitation A*, the

Ordo is in progress, and the discourse serves as a transition between the opening Latin prayers and the sacramental scenes that follow. Here, we seem to be at a scene of lay visitation, with no priest necessarily present. As a result, rather than preparing directly for sacramental confession, the sick person is enjoined to think bitterly of past sins and admit them to God in preparing for death, only “thereafter” seeking out “trewe preestes” for “conseil”—it would seem on matters too specialized or intimate to be shared with the lay speaker. Nor is any explicit mention made of the sacramental, as distinct from pastoral, role of “trewe preestes.” Although “conseil” here could just be a term for confession, there is no presumption that the role of “trewe preestes” is to perform the *Ordo* or that they will necessarily be involved in the final stages of the sick person’s death. Rather, the priest may attend the sickbed rather as the lay officiant does here: not for liturgical reasons, but at the behest of a sick person who determines, on the basis of an assessment of a particular priest’s “truth,” that his attendance is “profitable.” The sick person, with the help of the officiating speaker, is now firmly in charge of the process of dying, and the formal visitation ritual described by the *Ordo* takes second place both to the lay visitation the work is enacting and to the counseling visit of the “trew preest” it enjoins.

Although the words “it is profitable to þe to have conseil of trewe preestes” sound like those of a lay officiant, nothing in this passage suggests the active exclusion of the sacraments of confession, communion, and unction from the deathbed or makes it incongruous for a “trewe preest” to use *Visitation* E as part of a performance of the *Ordo*. Yet even as it trusts in the divine mercy, the work is pessimistic about the easy availability of such priests. As the officiant laments, extolling the superiority of a good death over a life so full of “envye, wrathe, glotonye, lecherye, prude, slouth, covetise, ffalshed, manslaughter, and thefte” that the sinner’s only hope is a virtuous death: “But harde it is, to lyve wel fulliche in this wrecchede worlde.... For heere is hunger of goddis lawe and fewe þat desiren ther-aftir, and þei þat thristen þer-aftir been ofte-tymes slaked with bittere venym; and therefore þe charite of menye wexith coold thorough þe heete of wykked covetise.”⁹⁶ (“Covetise” is the sin that “Wimbledon’s Sermon” also finds at the root of modern corruption.) Even for those who “hunger” after “goddis lawe,” “trewe preestis”—priests of sufficient education and virtue—are hard to find: a common complaint in late medieval London in particular, as Sheila Lindenbaum has noted.⁹⁷ Indeed, one scenario the work may be addressing could involve the necessity of receiving the sacraments, in the context of the *Ordo*, from a parish priest who is not thought “trewe” or able to give good pastoral advice, so that supplementary

arrangements such as those represented by *Visitation E* become necessary.

With its careful instructions and thorough evocation of the affects and attitudes that constitute the good death, *Visitation E* allows a competent and devout lay person or other nonpriest to step in and fulfill the role of counselor and spiritual guide when “trewe preestes” are lacking. This role obviously cannot include the sacramental and may have other limitations. Nonetheless, it can involve the lay officiant not only in offering “counseil” of her or his own but in taking responsibility for the sick person’s final moments, even without the timely presence of a priest to say the final prayers of the *Ordo*. At the end of the work, the lay voice that has earlier informed the dying layperson that “it semeth þat þou hiest the faste in þe way fro this lyf to godward,” thus proceeds to interrogate the dying layperson in the faith in the words of the Anselmian *Admonitio*:⁹⁸ “*Brother or sustir, art thou glad that thou schalt deyen in cristene feith?*” “Yee.” Whether or not the *Ordo* is in progress around this scene, there is no indication that, even at the final crisis, any priest present will take over as a matter of course. In this milieu, “even-cristen” can continue to exhort and examine “even-cristen” even at the point of death.⁹⁹

Visitation E in Its Manuscript and Social Contexts

Writing of the surprisingly extensive lay circulation of the *Visitation of the Sick*, Vincent Gillespie draws the work into the confines of the term “laicization,” presenting it as a key example of what he calls that “process of assimilation by the laity of techniques and materials of spiritual advancement that had historically been the preserve of the clerical and monastic orders.”¹⁰⁰ Yet this formulation, important though it is, may understate the case. *Visitation E* is concerned with matters more pointed than lay “spiritual advancement,” from the existential issue of the lay soul’s eternal destiny to the ecclesiological one of the respective status and roles of clerical and lay participants in the deathbed drama. In its first wave of popularity, the work appears in compilations that do much more than lightly adapt clerical and monastic materials to lay use. Rather, these compilations share an ambitious understanding of their privileged lay addressees as exercising a spiritual ministry or jurisdiction over those in their care: as actants, not only in their own salvation but in that of others.

To some extent, this emphasis on lay spiritual jurisdiction aligns *Visitation E* with the specific mode of reformist vernacular anticlericalism associated with Wycliffism. The work uses at least two of the phrases Anne Hudson has identified as part of a “Lollard sect

vocabulary,” “trewē preestis” and “Goddiss lawe,” while several of the compilations in which it appears have attracted scholarly attention for their inclusion of heterodox alongside orthodox works, and for the watchful and critical attitude toward the clergy they foster in their readers: an attitude we have seen *Visitation E* seeks to inculcate even in the dying.¹⁰¹ The work’s relative indifference to the *Ordo* ritual; its emphasis on inner contrition at the expense of sacramental confession; its lack of direct interest in communion and extreme unction; its concern to place the dying person, with or without a priest in attendance, in unmediated dialogue with God: all these are parallel or analogous to stances often associated with vernacular Wycliffite writings, including writings that traveled with the work and occasionally show signs of its influence.¹⁰²

Yet as has become increasingly clear in recent scholarship, by the early fifteenth century, many of the emphases characteristic of Wycliffite writing were shared in literate lay religiosity in general, at least in the urban environments within which prose religious compilations such as those containing *Visitation E* circulated, which evince both the characteristic “similarity in the motivations of dissenters and conformists” Ian Forrest describes in his book on fifteenth-century English heresy proceedings and the “cosmopolitan” inclusivity ascribed to London religious compilations by Stephen Kelly and Ryan Perry.¹⁰³ Although interconnections between *Visitation E* and vernacular Wycliffism deserve exploration—particularly in light of one of the work’s earliest manuscripts, University College 97, whose Wycliffite sympathies often lie close to the surface¹⁰⁴—the common emphasis on lay spiritual jurisdiction in *Visitation E* and the books in which it traveled point not only to the history of religious radicalism but also to a specific fifteenth-century development within the culture of pastoral care. This development is the new importance assigned a specifically secular site of such care, the urban lay household.

The household had always been a place of pastoral instruction and discipline, in which parents and householders had something of the same obligation to catechize and correct children and servants that a curate had to his parishioners.¹⁰⁵ When the *Treatise of Wedded Men*, found in Westminster School 3, a manuscript associated with Bodley 938, exhorts parents not merely to allow “godfadriss and godmodriss to techen þe children þe Paternoster and þe Crede” but to ensure that they fully understand “þe hestis [commandments] of God,” without which “þei schullen not be savyd ... but be ful hard and depe dampnyd in helle, more þan heþene men,” it is dramatizing a familiar lesson.¹⁰⁶ But in late fourteenth- and fifteenth-century English cities, as scholars such as Sarah Rees Jones and Shannon McSheffrey have recently shown, the extended, hierarchical household unit played a

vital role in the maintenance of order and “civic morality,” as urban governments made the male householder directly responsible for monitoring sexual conduct, arranging marriages, and giving monetary sureties for the lawful conduct of all the coresidents under his charge. As Rees Jones puts it, for the “new civic and guild structures of administration” of the fifteenth century, the household in its entirety “should be a place of good government in which the harmonious ends of civic government might be achieved.”¹⁰⁷

Keeping pace with this broadened focus on temporal governance, several of the compilations containing *Visitation E* have at their center the conscious elevation of and intensification of focus on the specifically *spiritual* jurisdiction of the paterfamilias, whose exercise of a “fadris love to his meyne [household],” through teaching, admonishment, discipline, and encouragement, obliges him, according to *How lordis and housbondemen schulden teche goddis commaundementis*, to carry out not only “þe office of holy chirche” within his jurisdiction (“in his hous”) but “on sum maner [in some sense] a bischopes office.”¹⁰⁸ Several of the household miscellanies in which *Visitation E* appears provide materials for a householder to utilize in his “benevolent rule” over dependents, as he instructs, guides, and shapes himself, his godly familia, and even his tenants and day laborers.¹⁰⁹ The inclusion of the work in these books thus serves to extend the householder’s spiritual governance to the edge of the lives of his dependents, providing the encouragement and knowledge needed to supplement the parish priest’s ministry at the deathbed.

The instructional program retained in whole or part in most of the compilations that contain *Visitation E* is Pecham’s Syllabus, which in addition to the works of mercy required priests and parishioners to know the articles of faith, the commandments of old and new law, the seven sacraments, the four cardinal and three theological virtues, and their antagonists, the seven deadly sins.¹¹⁰ In some *Visitation E* books, the reformist orientation of these catechetical clusters toward enabling lay teaching and learning is especially clear. Cambridge University Library MS Nn.4.12 (c. 1400), for example, is made up almost wholly of texts expanding the basic Syllabus materials: the so-called Wycliffite expositions of the Pater Noster, Ave Maria,¹¹¹ and Apostles Creed; a commentary on the Ten Commandments; *Visitation E*; and a number of other works that crisscross through the items on Pecham’s Syllabus several times.¹¹² These texts not only provide the information the reader needs to be saved, they also argue for the duty of laypeople both to teach one another the same truths and to hold the church to its own, sober pastoral responsibilities: “Oure beleve [Creed] techis us þat God ordeyned hyt [it] al, and bad [commanded] þat men schuld cun [memorize] hyt, and teche yt to oþer. And 3if prelatys faylyn in

þis, Christ seyde þat stonys schulde cry (Luke 19:40); and secler [secular] lordys schuld, in defawte [absence] of prelaytis, lerne and preche þe law of God in here modyr tonge,” states the Apostles Creed commentary, encapsulating one of the programs of the manuscript as a whole.¹¹³ In University College 97, *Visitation* E again appears with a full set of expositions of the items in Pecham’s Syllabus, this time along with the less widely known text on the two commandments of the new law, *Diliges Dominum Deum Tuum*, which instructs readers to “kepe and teche the comaundement3 of God,” in part by providing “holy conseillyng and techyng” to sinful neighbors in need.¹¹⁴ Both books seek to expand the spiritual duties of lay people to include what is, in effect, pastoral teaching. The presence of *Visitation* E among these works is a further symptom of the reformist orientation of both.¹¹⁵

Indeed, *Visitation* E appears with these catechetical items so regularly that it appears to have attained the status of an indispensable instructional text. London, British Library Royal MS 17.A.xxvi, for example, groups the works with a further set of expositions of Syllabus items, some of them in their Wycliffite versions, then expands its program by adding the Middle English version of the Anglo-Norman *Apocalypse*, with prologue and commentary, and the Early Version *Wycliffite Bible* translation of John’s Gospel.¹¹⁶ In the bulky Oxford, Bodleian Library Laud Miscellaneous MS 210, *Visitation* E again appears with a cluster of mostly Wycliffite catechetical items, along with the vigorously reformist and affective *Book to a Mother*, which encourages lay participation in certain areas of pastoral care, such as correcting the sins of others, in the context of a highly ambitious program of lay asceticism.¹¹⁷

Visitation E is not a casual addition to these more complex collections. On the contrary, it shares in the wider rhetoric and goals of its textual companions. For example, the Wycliffite tract on excommunication, “þe grete sentence of curs expounded,” found in London, Westminster School MS 3, with all the Wycliffite catechetical items mentioned above, describes the profitableness of “confession maad to trewe prestis”—with “contricioun for synnes before done” and “good life and keeping Goddis hestis and werkis of mercy ... after”—in much the same terms as *Visitation* E.¹¹⁸ A commentary on Psalm 26, found uniquely in the same book, also echoes *Visitation* E’s lament for the loss of “Goddis lawe” in the current “wrecchindes of þis world,” deploring the “worldly wrecchis, ful of pride, ypocrisie, and covetise,” who “wenne [hope] to stoppe ... goddis lawe,” prophesying that “al þe persecucioun and sclandre þat comeþ to goddis trewe servauntis schal turne hem to good, as holy writt seiþ.”¹¹⁹ Treatises on

the Ten Commandments in several manuscripts offer helpful context for one of the work's theologically self-conscious moments, when the dying person, while gazing at "a cros or ymage made wiþ mannys hondes," as the *Ordo* enjoins, is directed to "sey or thinke in thyin herte: 'I woot wel þou art not god, but ymaad aftir hym, to make men have þe moore mynde of hym after whom þou art ymagid.'" ¹²⁰ Although *Visitation E* is here immediately drawing on *Visitation A*, which is itself indebted to Baudri's *De visitacione infirmorum*,¹²¹ it seems that in this milieu, even at the point of death, idolatry is a potentially dangerous breach of "Goddess lawe."

So integral is *Visitation E* to these compilations, indeed, that one passage of the work is directly taken over by the prologue to the Wycliffite *Ten Commandments* in the version found in the large early fifteenth-century compilation, London, British Library Harley MS 2398:

[*Visitation E*; italicized passages from *Visitation A*] *ffor every day a man neigheth his deeth neer and nee. ffor the moore a man in this lyf wexith [grows] in dayes and 3eres, the moore he unwexith [diminishes]. For, as seyntes seyn: þe firste day in the whiche a man is born is þe firste day of his deth. ffor every day he is diyng while he is in this lyf. And therfore seith þe gospelle: "Awake, for þou wost never whiche hour god is to come" (Matthew 24:42), in thi 3outhen or in thi myddel age or in thi laste dayes, or prevelyche [secretly] or openliche. And therfore loke þat þou be alwey redy! For it is semeliche [appropriate] þat þe servant abyde þe lord, and not the lord his servaunt. And nameliche whan greet haste is, he is worthi blame þat is unredy. But grettere haste no man redith of, than schalle be in þe comynge of Crist.*

[Harley 2398: italicized passages from *Visitation E*] *For everych day a man ney3ep to his deþ, nere and nere. For þe more a man in his lyfe wexep in dayes & 3eres, þe more he unwexep. For, as seyntes seggeþ: "þe furste day in þe weke þat a man is ybore is þe furste day of his deþ. For everyche day he is deyng whyle he is in þis lyf." And þerfore seyþ þe Gospel: "Awake, for þou wost never whiche [h]oure God is to come": whether in þy 3onge age, other in þy myddel age, other in þy laste days; or pryvelyche, other openlyche. And þerfore looke þou beo alwey bysy in his servys. And þenne, what tyme ever he come, þou mayst beo to hym redy. For it is semeliche þat servant abyde þe lorde, and nou3t þe lord his servant. & namelyche, whanne gret hast ys, he is worþy blame þat is þenne unredy. Bot gretter hast no man redeth of þan schal beo in comynge of Crist. And þus þou mayst wel y-knowe þat it is lytel ynow to kepe continuelliche Godes hestes to make a goode ende.*¹²²

Appropriately borrowed from the end of the first exhortation of *Visitation E*, where the speaker turns from the dying person to the attendants, with the words "and this is not oonliche to telle to syke men, but eke to hoole men," in its new context this passage understands death preparation as a central part of the Christian life in

a society directed by the Ten Commandments. Although no other copy of the Wycliffite *Ten Commandments* contains this prologue, its appearance here is again suggestive of how integral to reformist pastoral thought both *Visitation E* itself and the practice of sickbed visitation the work outlines in such detail had become.

Several of the books containing *Visitation E* offer insight as to the kind of audience that might be concerned to reflect on and practice the expanded spiritual role accorded to lay lords and householders, but it is again Harley 2398 that offers the most suggestive set of textual and social contexts for the work. The literate lay reader for whom Harley seems to have been produced is invoked in the incipit of its very first item, the pastoral and contemplative treatise *Memoriale credencium*: “Man and womman þat wilneþ [determines] to fle synne and lede clene lyfe, takeþ hede to þis litul tretys þat is y-write in englich tong for lewed men þat konne not understonde latyne ne frenssche.”¹²³ This same readership is addressed in all the dozen or more works that follow, which both confirm and complicate the program laid out in *Memoriale credencium* by focusing not only on the individual lay person’s “clen lyf” but on the role she or he can play in shaping the lives of others. As well as affective texts, including the Bridgetine *Fifteen O’s* and chapters on prayer and meditation from the lay manual *Fervor Amoris* (items 2 and 14), the book includes several expositions of catechetical items that, as often, provide material for religious instruction as well as learning (an exposition of the Ten Commandments and three of the Paternoster: items 3, 7, 10, 13). Besides *Visitation E* (item 8), it also includes a series of texts on the three estates, some of which lay out the duty to teach more directly: “Wimbleton’s Sermon,” a relatively conservative work in this regard, as we have seen (item 6); *Of Wedded Men and Wyves and Here Children*, with its instructions on household teaching (item 9); and, most interestingly, the *Schort Reule of Lif* and a work found only here, *The Fyve Wyttes* (items 15 and 4).¹²⁴

It is important to bear in mind that the bulk of Harley treats the reader as the recipient of religious knowledge, not its teacher, instructing him or her (in the words of *Memoriale credencium*) how “a man shal lyve parfitlych and holylich” through faith, penance, the practice of the virtues, and “knowyng of hym self and knowyng of god almyȝty.”¹²⁵ Nonetheless, although we do not know who first owned Harley 2398, its contents suggest that the book was also compiled in a conscious effort to delineate and develop the view of the pastoral duties of the privileged laity sketched in texts like *How lordis and housbondemen schulden teche goddis commaundementis* from Westminster 3, which teach their lay readers how to exercise “on sun

maner a bischopes office,” of which participation in deathbed visitation forms an important part.¹²⁶

The *Schort Reule* is much invested in a lord’s spiritual instruction of his household, including his “homli meyne” or domestic servants and even his “tenauntis.” Very much like *How lordis and housbondemen schulden teche goddis commaundementis*, it threatens the reader with damnation for failing to correct his servants—“For þou shalt be dampned for þer yvel [evil] lif and þin evel suffraunce [forbearance] but if þou amende it up þi myȝt [to the best of your power]”—and exhorts him to “chastise in good maner hem þat [those who] ben rebel aȝens Goddis hestis [commandments].” The lord’s duty to “meyntene [look after] truli up þi kunnyng and miȝt [to the extent of your skill and power] Goddis lawe and trewe prechouris” may still be the most important of his spiritual duties, in which ““if þou failist ... þou forfetist [offend] aȝens God in al þi lordshipe in bodi and soule.” But it is only the most public and political among the many duties he is expected to perform.¹²⁷

The importance ascribed to the visitation of the sick itself within this spiritual economy is most obviously affirmed by the appearance of *Visitation* E. But the prominent place played by deathbed visitation in the exercise of lay spiritual governance is also suggested in telling detail by *The Fyve Wyttes*, an important work (or portion of a work) that offers an extended and wide-ranging analysis of the proper uses, positive and negative, of each of the bodily senses.¹²⁸ Like any treatise on the senses, the work is much preoccupied with governance of the body, which it understands as a “dwellyng-place” or “halle” with “fyve sotel [thin] wyndowes,” and which God both commands and counsels be appropriately ruled, its windows and gates opened or shut as will benefit the soul who lives within. Less usually for this genre, the work is also concerned with the reader’s governance of the communal body of his extended household, threatened as all its members equally are by spiritual death: “Deth haþ ascendyd by ȝoure wyndowes; it is entred into ȝoure houses for to dyspercle [destroy] þe lytel childeren of wiþoute and þe ȝongelynges [young men] of þe stretys (Jeremiah 9:21).”¹²⁹ Indeed, the work continually shifts between its individual and its social registers, sometimes treating the reader as though his duties are all to himself, only to resituate him quickly within his actual position of difficult authority over others.

As a result of this double allegiance to the reader’s inner and public lives, *The Fyve Wyttes* offers particularly astute and well-balanced analyses of the standard moral topics of the genre, sometimes parting ways with more severe contemporary works on issues such as food, clothing, and minstrelsy in pursuit of a practical working model of the “mixed” lay life. Perhaps its most socially

nanced passages, however, concern visitation of the sick, a ritual in which the reader may have to venture outside his own domestic space and the normal ambit from which he governs territory, town, or guild, into the homes of his subjects. Thus the work's account of smell, and the visceral kind of suffering associated with this sense, imagines such a visitation to the alien deathbed of a person with a disgusting illness, or incontinence, or a decaying body:

Yf þou see þin evene-cristene, þe creature of God, in visitacioun of sykenesse ouþer hirtynge [pain], as suche desese [for example, some injury] þat is roted oþer is corrupt [stinking] wherfore he haþ bodyly desese, or elles of eny ynward desese or syknesse, as yf þat his breþ is nouȝt lusty [fresh] ouþer paraunter [perhaps] unkyndely [unwholesome] corrupcioun comynge from himself which for fybulnesse he may nouȝt kepe himself from. And yf þou spare [fail] þerfor come to him in comfort of him or, yf þou come, paraunter for abhominacioun of suche savour [smell] þou makest loþly semelant [an unpleasant face] wharby he is discomforted [embarrassed] oþer þat oþre be þe loþer [less willing] for to visite him, in þis þou forfetest [do wrong]. Þenke wel in þyn herte þat, þough þou be now nevere so fresch and swote, þou myȝt ful lyȝtly [easily] in a lytel tyme be as loþly and unlusty as he ... Spare nouȝt þerfore goedly for to visite and comforte such on as þou miȝt liȝtly be when God wol.¹³⁰

An earlier passage, on sight, also sees the reader faced with the unpleasantnesses that accompany performance of the works of mercy, enjoining him to “byhalde Crist in his lymes” (in the fellow Christians who are the limbs of his body on earth) by focusing not on the healthy and powerful but on “hem þat ben at myschef or desese of body, relyvyng [relieving] hem and comforynge after þy powere,” performing all the works of mercy including “comforynge hem þat ben syke,” while reflecting “in þyn herte þat þey ben Godes creatures and his owene ymage.”¹³¹

Both these passages make careful use of the egalitarian discourse of the “even-cristen,” a strong presence throughout the treatise. Both, however, also presuppose a social imbalance between the lord and those to whom he offers comfort. In beholding “Crist in his lymes,” a theological formula that readily blends with the social formula in which the lord is the “head” of his household, the reader is to remember that the sufferers “ben breþeren and systers after kynde and grace of redempcioun”:¹³² a reflection itself suggestive of social distance between the reader and his “even-cristen.” In the passage on smell, the danger that, should the reader “makest loþly semelant” at the smell of a sick person, other people may “be þe loþer for to visite him” also suggests an occasion fraught with the pressures that inhere in encounters between those who are not social equals, especially in the household space of the dying person, which has its own internal

hierarchies of power and spiritual responsibility. In requiring that the reader humble himself by the reflections and good works they enjoin, both passages imply that, when the lord carries out the work of mercy, he does so among his own subordinates and as a matter of special, as well as general, responsibility. It is not hard to see why Harley should include, as a matter of course, a copy of *Visitation E* to enable this difficult duty to be performed.

As the text develops its theme of the difficult uses of the senses, it indeed becomes clear that the lay reader is being understood as fundamentally a *minister*, whose duties to all to whom he is connected by any tie of dependency mirror the duties of a curate to everyone in his parish so closely that the two can be discussed in quite similar terms. Another discussion of sight, often reminiscent of the *Schort Reule*, thus notes that, for those in “governance temperal and spiritual” alike, spiritual responsibility for one’s dependents is a matter of eternal life and death:

Dou schalt byhalde [consider] diligently þulke þat þou hast in governaile [have responsibility for] temperal and spiritual, þat þou kepe þe lawe of God principaly after þe counceyl of þe wyse man, seyynge þus: *Diligenter considera vultum pecoris tui*. “Bysyly byholde þe chiere or þe vysage of þy best [beast]” (Proverbs 27:23). Þat is: tak goed hede how þy servantes and þy subjectes lyveþ, þat þey be nouȝt vicious. Yf þou be a curat and hast spiritual governaile and charge of mennes soules, þou art bounde opon peyne of þyn owen dampnacioun for to take hede to þulke þat þou hast in cure.... Iff þou have temporal governaile, þou art bounde and helde, upon payne of þyn owen dampnacioun, to loke and byhalde þat þy subjectȝ kepe þe lawe of God, þat ben þy wyf, þy childe, þy hured hyne [hired servant], þy bounde servaunt and þy tenaunt, and alle oþer þat þou hast a warde [under your protection].¹³³

The curate has to perform differently with different kinds of parishioners, learning to preach and teach in the way most likely to bring each to God. Yet the secular lord also has to think in flexible ways, since his rule over the six categories of dependents listed here differs. It is necessary to “teche þy childe in his ȝouþe for to love Crist and his lawe,” like any parent; equally to “teche” “þy hured hyne” and “þy tenaunt,” often through discipline, warning them if they “surfete” and expelling them “fro þy companye” if they are “incorrigible and wol nouȝt amende hem”; and to punish a “bounde servaunt,” not possible to expel, “for brekyng of Cristes byddyng” more swiftly than for trespass against one’s “persone.”¹³⁴ The lord’s duties even extend to policing the teaching of religion in his territories, where he is to exercise a similar mix of discipline and discretion toward the itinerant preachers often called “heretykes or lollardes,” whose vulnerable informality he should, unless they prove false, protect in

the name of the prophetic truths they deliver.¹³⁵ At the same time, he must also be to his tenants “as þe hurde [shepherd] his schep,” sharing the same pastoral duty and living under the same threat of divine punishment “oppon þulke þat [those who] rechelesly rewleþ ther subgett3 or serveþ hem nou3t of competent necessities” as do priests with care of souls.¹³⁶ For in the words of 1 Timothy, the biblical book on pastoral care, “Who þat rekkeþ nou3t of his [does not take care of his own], and namely [especially] of þo þat ben of his housholde, how þey lyve ne how þey be governed, he haþ forsake his feyþ and ys wors þan a paynem [pagan].”¹³⁷

Fyve Wyttes thus suggests a set of social contexts in which a lay householder might make actual pastoral use of a text like the *Visitation of the Sick* E as part of his wider temporal and spiritual responsibilities toward his subjects, and also as part of his exercise of lordship over them. In the process, it does not quite merge lay and religious forms of spiritual governance, demanding of the “curate” a level of rhetorical skill, psychological expertise, and self-awareness that the lord is not taken to possess. Although the priest’s role, like the lord’s, is to teach divine law, the work’s professional pride in the *cura animarum* comes through in its depictions of the subtlety of the true priest, to whom the reader owes a duty of spiritual obedience as part of his wider duty to behave as a member of the ordinary laity. However, within the framework of secular duties the work sketches for the lord, the practice of visiting sick subjects—a practice that could readily extend to teaching them and those with them, and to helping them to die—is represented on a continuum both with the lord’s temporal duty to see that his subjects “have here necessities competently to here bodylye nede” and with the curate’s spiritual responsibility to save the souls of his parishioners.¹³⁸ A mix of firm discipline and comfort these special qualities that those who carry out the visitation of the sick must bring to the households they enter, according to the *Visitation* texts—is the key to the governance of others in both cases.

The devolution of spiritual responsibility and governance at work in *Visitation* A and E, and in the household books within which the latter circulates, are thus complex. They demand a new level of alertness to the nonritual elements of the deathbed rite on the part of the priest, who must look to the deathbed as a pastoral opportunity as well as a liturgical duty. But because the sacraments are no longer necessarily at the center of the death rite, they also invite a new concern to manage the process of dying on the part of the lay sick person, who must exercise spiritual self-governance in order to respond to the new demands for spiritual preparation that the rite, as supplemented by the *Visitation of the Sick*, makes on the dying. Since

this dying figure is part of a lay community who is included in the work's exhortations, these responsibilities spill over to the deathbed attendants, who in *Visitation E* are in turn charged with a more nuanced relationship to the duty of comfort and counsel than was explicitly so earlier. Finally, when the attendant is a household paterfamilias, this role takes on an almost priestly level of responsibility, since the lord must answer before God for the souls of those under his temporal subjection. As a public space, the medieval lay deathbed must always have been finely and socially articulated. Responding to developments in late medieval civic and religious culture, the *Visitation* texts in their manuscript contexts show these articulations in newly self-conscious use.

The multiplication of layers of governance over oneself and others within the institution of the household that lies behind the *Visitation of the Sick* is part of the wider multiplication of jurisdictions James Simpson has argued was characteristic of fifteenth-century culture in general and that was so of the period's religious reform in particular.¹³⁹ In the rest of this book, we see this same multiplication of responsibility repeatedly in action, as all the roles in play around the deathbed intensify through the course of the century and the cultural meanings of dying well ramify in response. In this first chapter, we have encountered these processes only distantly, through books whose early use must mostly be inferred from their contents. Despite suggestive links between the metropolis and three household books in play here, Westminster School 3, Bodley 938, and University College 97 and the strong possibility that London was a center of copying and exchange for other books of the same type, we know too little of the circumstances in which these books were first used to localize them with much social specificity. In the materials to which we turn now, we are more fortunate: most texts discussed in the rest of this book attach to specific London biographies, institutions, and places. The chapter that follows introduces us in particular to an urban religiosity deeply invested in clerical education and increasingly secularized, in which the spiritual authority that accrues to the lay paterfamilias over his household in the *Visitation E* can be seen writ large at the civic level.

Dying Generations

The Dance of Death

The Good Death of Richard Whittington

An image of the deathbed of Richard Whittington, wealthy merchant, important creditor to the Crown, and three times mayor of London, forms the frontispiece of the earliest copy of an English translation of the ordinances governing the Whittington almshouse, one of the institutions funded by his massive bequest (Figure 1). The ordinances were written in Latin and sealed by three of Whittington's executors—John Coventry, William Grove, and John Carpenter—in December 1424, twenty months after the merchant's death in March 1423 and shortly after work had been finished on the building both of the almshouse and of a closely related institution nearby.¹ This was the college of priests, dedicated to the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary, at St. Michael's Paternoster, Whittington's parish church, whose refurbishing and expansion he had supported during his lifetime and where he and his wife were buried. Along with a library at the Guildhall, the building complex where the city administration was located, these two institutions constituted the most spectacular manifestations of the series of high-profile death projects associated with Whittington's name.

The English translation of the ordinances dates from 1442–43, almost two decades later than its Latin original and shortly after the death of the final executor, Carpenter, who, as the “common clerk” of the city from 1417 on, was by far the most important administrator of Whittington's estate. The translation thus coincides with the moment, long anticipated by the Latin ordinances, when oversight of the entirety of the estate, including the college of priests and the almshouse, passed into the hands of the Mercers' Company. This was the guild to which the former mayor and one of the executors, Coventry, belonged. As Anne Sutton argues, with its acquisition of the massive Whittington charity, the Mercers' guild became the most

powerful organization in London. The professionally written copy that contains the frontispiece image is likely to have been made for the new overseers in the mid-1440s as soon as the translation itself was complete. The frontispiece, a fine pen drawing by the prominent London “lymner” William Abell, confirms the book’s quasi-official status.²



FIGURE 1. Richard Whittington on his deathbed.

Ordinances for Whittington's Almshouse, folio 1r. Courtesy of the Mercers' Company.

Photograph by Louis Sinclair.

The drawing represents a dying Whittington in the act of commissioning the foundation of the almshouse. He is attended by his physician, in the background, who is confirming the imminence of his bodily dissolution by checking his urine; by his priest, possibly William Brooke, rector of St. Michael's Paternoster and first master of Whittington college, who is standing composedly at his head on the bed's farther side; and by various lay members of his household and local London community.³ These include thirteen bedesmen, representatives of the almshouse, clustering in rows toward and behind the bed foot; and two of the executors, Carpenter and Coventry, identified by names on their tunics and standing at the head of the bed across from the priest. However, the most prominent lay figure in the drawing, tall, bearded, and likewise identified by name, is the third executor, William Grove, a professional scribe active in London in the early part of the century. Grove, whose role here derives from the fact that he made the authoritative copy of the Latin ordinances, is pictured in silent colloquy with the dying man, the first in a chain of figures who successively mediate, implement, and benefit from Whittington's charity. His hands for now devoid of writing instruments, Grove makes a gesture of acquiescence to Whittington's gesture of command, looking sternly across the bed at Carpenter and Coventry, whose own hands in turn eagerly direct our (and perhaps Whittington's) gaze toward the bedesmen and their first head tutor, Robert Chesterton.⁴ With these bedesmen—their diminutive bodies partly hidden, their eyes turned gratefully toward their benefactor, their intercessions for his soul evoked by the rosary held in Chesterton's right hand—the energetic foundation narrative represented by the scene reaches its denouement.

In certain ways, the scene depicted in the frontispiece to the English ordinances seems in tune with the shifts in the understanding and representation of death during the decades before and after 1400 described in the last chapter. Written in the 1380s as a vernacular supplement to the liturgical rite, the *Ordo ad visitandum infirmorum*, and based on two well-established Latin death texts, the A version of the Middle English *Visitation of the Sick* made possible a new level of informed participation by the non-Latinate dying person in the church's last rites, at a moment when such participation was coming to seem theologically necessary. Produced at very nearly the same time, and still in circulation in early fifteenth-century London alongside other reformist texts, the more radically lay-oriented longer

version of this text, *Visitation E*, went further, encouraging the idea that lay people could not only make an informed good death but help others to do so, too: even, if necessary, in the absence of the morally upright “trewe preest” it describes.

Like the deathbed rooms that had for centuries been the destination of solemn processions such as the one described in the Sarum rite, Whittington’s deathbed thus transforms the private room in which it is situated into a public space, crowded with the dying person’s “even-cristen.” Yet as is differently the case in both versions of *The Visitation of the Sick*, the center of gravity here has once again, in Abell’s representation, become emphatically lay. The priest is present, indeed ready at hand, and takes proper priority over the doctor, in accord with the ecclesiastical principle noted in the A version: “it is ordeined be the lawe that ther shal no leche given no bodily medicine to a seke man til he be helid gostli [spiritually healed], & that he have take gostli medicine, that is to sai, shrift & housel [confession and absolution].”⁵ But although the priest is at the bed, he is almost marginal, his eyes and hands taking no part in the gestures that link almost all the other figures, his place in Whittington’s line of vision crowded out by the scrivener Grove, the recorder of Whittington’s dying wishes. As is the case in *Visitation A* and more emphatically in *Visitation E*, much of the priest’s sacral authority has thus passed to the dying person, on this occasion the same paterfamilias whose role in the conduct of the deathbed is affirmed in the latter’s text and manuscript companions. In consequence, despite the drawing’s investment in the communitarian, the laicized space around the deathbed has become hierarchic, affirming both the householder’s authority over his “meynee [household]” and the fierce responsibilities that go with it. Though he is no longer able to help them personally to die, as does the householder in the *Fyve Wyttes*, and though he needs their prayers, Whittington still looks to their good from the throne of this deathbed, in part by requiring their submission to a unifying disciplinary regime.

In other respects, though, the frontispiece depiction of the famous dying merchant differs sharply from the model deathbeds considered so far. This is partly a matter of scale. Whittington’s well-governed household is massive, incorporating the almshouse, the college of priests, the Guildhall Library, and the London metropolis itself, and extending indefinitely through time as well as space. To exercise the mix of temporal and spiritual governance represented by the almshouse and its companion institution requires the energies of others over generations, not years. But there is also a qualitative difference. This deathbed belongs to a substantial urban merchant: a man whose worldly importance is wholly the result of his success in

creating wealth. As a result, the drawing is necessarily deeply concerned with wealth and its relation to the soul's salvation. The iconography of the drawing recalls that of the death of a monarch or a saint, surrounded not by royal kin or monastic brethren but by the aldermen and bureaucrats who carry out the dying man's spectacular charitable work. Yet despite the drawing's aura of sanctity, the dying man at its center is not depicted as focused on the next world, "nou3t thenkyng ... on thy riches, but oonliche and stedefastliche on the passioun of owre lord Jhesu Crist," as *Visitation E* enjoins, gazing at a cross held before his eyes or rehearsing the colloquy with God that goes with this gaze.⁶ Instead, his interests are all in this world: in an urban institution, its charitable mandate, its perpetuation, and its money.

From the perspective of this new deathbed, *Visitation E* appears idealistic, stripped down to its urgent focus on the moment of death and the mixture of penitence, control, and abandonment to the crucified Christ it requires. Instead of preparing affectively to face eternity, Whittington is practically focused on two temporal futures: his time in the intermediate realm of purgatory and the charitable foundations, starting with the almshouse itself, that will help shorten this time. The *Visitation* is silent on the matter of purgatory and specifically counsels the dying not to think on "on thy riches." But Whittington must above all else think on his riches: partly because, as a former civic leader and substantial business owner, he has an obligation to dispose of them well; partly because these riches, acquired through mercantile trade, put his salvation in peril if he does not think about them. "As in the myddel of a joynnyng of stones a paele [staff], or a stake, ficchid [fixed] is, so bitwen the myddel of biyng and silling he shall ben anguyshyt with synnes," declares Ecclesiasticus 27:2.⁷ If Whittington is finally to "legge" the "stoon" of his soul "in þe walle of þe citee of heven slighliche [carefully], with-owte eny noyse or stryf," as *Visitation E* puts it,⁸ his preparation of this stone demands that he continue, until the last minute, to engage with the world.

In relation to the book of almshouse ordinances the frontispiece prefaces, the mixed religious, social, civic, and financial concerns signified by Whittington's urgently pointing hand take us most obviously to the text of the ordinances themselves. Greeting "alle the trewe people of Cryste," the ordinances indeed open with a kind of gloss on the image, in the form of a sententious statement of the devout pragmatism that brought the almshouse into existence:

The fervent desire and besy intension of a prudent, wise, and devoute man shold be to cast before [plan in advance] & make seure the state and th'ende of his short lyff with dedes of mercy and pite. And namely to provide for suche pouer persones whiche grevous penurie and cruelle

fortune have oppressed and be not of power to gete their lyvyng, either by craft or by eny other bodily labour. Whereby that, at þe day of the last Jugement, he may take his part with hem [those] that shalle be saved. This considering devoutly, þe forsaid worthy & notable marchant Richard Whityngon, the whiche, while he leved, had right lyberalle and large handes to þe nedy and pouer people, charged streitly in his deth bed ... to ordeyne an house of Almes after his deth, for perpetuell sustentacion of suche pouer people.⁹

Here Carpenter and his fellow executors, who voice the entire document as the fulfillment of Whittington's "comendable wille and holsom desire," represent the almshouse in the exemplary terms often used of the Whittington charity.¹⁰ The ordinances then go on to spell out, among other things, the almshouse's physical extent and design, the moneys to be spent in the maintenance of the bedesmen, the prayers they must say each day for Whittington and his wife, and the behavior required of them as they live in Whittington's foundation, in order that they may be worthy "after the ende of this liff" of the "hous of the kyngdom of heven whiche to pore folk is promist."¹¹ Following an old solution to the problem of merchant salvation, the ordinances show Whittington "slihliche" preparing his own soul-stone by preparing those of his poor beneficiaries, so that "at þe day of the last Jugement he may take his part with hem that shalle be saved," smuggling himself into heaven with the "pore folk" who are its most legitimate heirs.

But simply because of the position of Abell's elegant and thoughtful deathbed scene at the front of this apparently utilitarian text, Whittington's pointing hand also directs us toward the other half of the frame, at the end of the book. Here the translator has written a brief envoy, in the form of a Chaucerian rhyme royal stanza, dedicating the translation and the book that contains it to the trustees of the Whittington estate and wardens of the Mercers' guild for whom it was made, who in 1442–43 were John Olney, Geoffrey Feldyng, Geoffrey Boleyne, and John Burton (Figure 2):

penſe to make new Statutes & to revoke thoſe
now be made by ye in aſſes we ſe ſhould expedi-
ent this our preſent ordinance not with-
ſtanding as longe as we live // **In wytt-
neſſe** of whiche thinges to yeſe preſent
lettres we have putte our ſeales // **Y**
uen at london the xxij day of de-
cembre the yere of our Lord a thouſande
three hundred and ſixty. And the yere of King Henry the
ſeynte after the Conqueſt the thretythe //

Alphabet Statuta Dow & Downe

Go litel boke go litel tregedie
The towne ſubmitting to al correction
Of theyn ſeruyng maſtres now of the mercy
Gyfte ffelowshepe & helpe and of duryon
Gyfte theyn beſeruyng wth hymble ſaluacion
The to receyve and thus to take myſte
ffor ever to be a ſeruum pro in pace corale.

FIGURE 2. Envoy.

Ordinances for Whittington's almshouse, folio 15r. Courtesy of the Mercers' Company.

Photograph by Louis Sinclair.

Go litel boke, go litel tregedie,

The[e] lowly submitting to al correccion
Of theym beyng maistres now of the Mercery,
Olney, Feldyng, Boleyne, and of Burton,
Hertily theym besekyng [beseeching], with humble
salutacion,
The[e] to accepte and thus to take in gre [look with favor],
For ever to be a servant within þeire cominalte
[community].¹²

The stanza's points of literary reference are, of course, the envoy to Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde*, which has the same first line and directs the "bok" to be a humble "subgit" to "Virgile, Ovide, Omer, Lucan, and Stace," before asking John Gower and Ralph Strode "to vouchen sauf, ther nede is, to correcte" the poem; and that of John Lydgate's *Troy Book*, whose author tells his book to "submitte to ... correccioun" and "put þe in þe grace" of its dedicatee, Henry V.¹³

As they close, the English ordinances may seem to move outside the discourse of theology, drawing on a secular poetics as they submit their account of the almshouse to the foundation's new "conservatours" and inviting the reader to view Whittington's charity through an overtly Trojan lens.¹⁴ However courtly their settings, Chaucer and Lydgate's glittering cities offer ready parallels to fifteenth-century London: a city ruled by the urban laity and shaped in significant ways by the Whittington estate. If poets rebuild the Old Troy, Whittington, his executors, and Mercers build the new: "Troynovaunt," the name by which late medieval Londoners proudly called their city.¹⁵ Together, the frontispiece and the envoy direct themselves toward the future as they memorialize the past, using image and word to preserve in cultural memory the protecting aura of the receding charismatic presence of the founder, Whittington, by enrolling him perpetually in a house of fame.¹⁶ More, this house of fame is not built, as in a literary text, with words but with solidly supported mortar and stone.

But in describing the ordinances as a "tregedie," the envoy also does something more searching, by acknowledging the indissoluble connection between Whittington's deathbed and Fortune: a theme Maura Nolan shows was a central preoccupation of fifteenth-century vernacular public culture and that we will see had important theological, as well as ethical, resonances in a city given over to trade.¹⁷ Richard Whittington is memorialized as a tragic hero, a great but imitable man who through his charitable bequests countered "the dedes of Fortune, that with an unwar [unanticipated] strook overturneth realmes of grete noblye," as Chaucer, scion of a London merchant family, puts it in his *Boece*.¹⁸ Merchants had a special

relationship with the concept of fortune, both practically in the day-to-day business of speculation and in coping with the vagaries of a market economy. Theorized as “risk,” the concept that differentiates legitimate trade from sinful usury, fortune was also central to the theological justification of their business. It is fortune that entitles merchants to profit from objects bought and later sold unaltered, because the act of storing these goods is “accompanied by the risk” of damage, fire, or robbery, subjecting them to the general “uncertainty about what may happen in the future,” as the Franciscan theologian Alexander of Hales puts it in his discussion of the temporal dimension of mercantile activity.¹⁹

Ending on its elegiac Trojan note, the envoy invites us to imagine Whittington staring down from heaven, with Chaucer’s hero Troilus, at “this litel spot of erthe that with the se / Embraced is,” learning to “despise / This wrecched world” as “vanite / To respect of the pleyn felicite / That is in hevene above,” and so completing the realignment of his interests from the earthly to the heavenly, the fortunate (“wrecched world”) to the felicitous (“pleyn felicite”), in a manner not possible while he was still alive. But where Troilus, representative of a different theological economy, can “lough right at the wo / Of hem that wepten for his deth so faste,”²⁰ Whittington needs the tears that Troilus despises, and the vigorous continuance of mercantile activity that the names of the “maistres now of the Mercery, / Olney, Feldyng, Boleyne, and of Burton” represent. At least in the minds and prayers of its living inhabitants, Whittington’s soul remains perpetually connected with the ever-changing fortunes of his institutions and of his city.

In a world more complicated by trade, profit, and the temporal rewards and spiritual dangers they bring than the *Visitation of the Sick* can acknowledge, how does a merchant die a good death? In early fifteenth-century London, a city built and constantly rebuilt on the profits of trade, this was a question not only for the superrich like Whittington but for inhabitants from almost all the diversity of professions necessitated and sustained by urban living: a question indeed pressing enough to be a matter of institutional concern to governors of the city itself. As this chapter argues, it was also a question whose answers had developed as fast as the cityscape, and in conjunction with it. According to *Piers Plowman*, a late fourteenth-century poem with close ties to London, a merchant who would be saved must use his winnings to “amende mesondieux” (hospitals) and repair broken roads and bridges, and assist in maintaining Christian community by providing several categories of the needy with the means to prosper:

Marien maydenes or maken hem nonnes;
Povere peple and prisons fynden hem hir [them their]
foode,
And sette scolers to scole, or to som opere craftes;
Releve Religion and renten [endow] hem bettere.²¹

Helping young women, the poor, prisoners, students, and monks to live as they ought, merchants exercise the corporal works of mercy discussed in the last chapter in specifically financial ways.

Fifty years later this solution was still relevant, as the Whittington almshouse shows. But just as the role of the layperson on and around the deathbed changed as spiritual responsibility passed into the hands of the laity, so answers to the problem of merchant salvation changed also. In its investments in a purgatorial economy, the almshouse, which is discussed in the next section of this chapter, is a traditional mercantile death project, although with contemporary updates and the conscious exemplarity that is a feature of all the Whittington projects. But this is not true of other institutions developed in Whittington's name, including the college of priests founded next to the almshouse: an institution only loosely related to "Religion" in the monastic sense in which Langland uses this term. Langland imagines merchants "in þe margyne" of Christian society.²² Under what was almost certainly the careful moral and intellectual as well as legal guidance of John Carpenter, who as common clerk amassed a private library of theology, ethics, and advice literature that Caroline Barron calls "one of the most extensive ... to be found in fifteenth-century London," the Whittington institutions place merchants and their associates at the center, taking charge of their own and others' religious education in just the way that *Visitation* E suggests a privileged layman should.²³

Yet if reformed religiosity provided part of the backdrop to the merchant "good death," it had too little to say about the immersion in fortune that was merchant life, or about the temporal in general, to provide a comprehensive guide to the concerns raised by wealth for dying merchants like Whittington, for whom Carpenter had spiritual responsibility as executor. Nor, in particular, could it address many of Carpenter's wider concerns as a professional and deeply devout common clerk, responsible for the good governance of a city whose corporate survival depended on its ability to outlive the individual bodies of its members, "dying generations" all.²⁴ The third section of the chapter thus considers some other possibilities enabled by the intimate relationship between mortality and temporal and spiritual government I am arguing to be a strong thread of late medieval death discourse, linked to Carpenter and the seat of city government, the

Guildhall, with its cadre of legally trained lay clerics. These possibilities include the purely administrative solution Carpenter offers to the problem of death in the *Liber albus* and the formal concern shown in his will for the decorous ritual commemoration of London's wealthy dead: part of a strong ethical commitment to the city's past balanced by the will's equal commitment to its future. They also include a Christian humanist strand of thinking about living and dying well, known to Carpenter through his personal copy of Petrarch's *De remediis utriusque fortunae* and somewhat distinct from the "reformist" discourse that has held center stage to this point.

The great early fifteenth-century London manifestation of this second strand of death discourse, the subject of the final section of the chapter, was the *Daunce of Poulys* or *Dance of Death*, a civic art project for which Carpenter, probably acting in his capacity as common clerk, seems to have been responsible. An idealized image of Christian London, the sequence of individualized deaths of which the work consists takes us back generically to the tragic and thematically to the fortunate. For while the *Daunce of Poulys* is in some ways aligned with the laicized reformist religiosity of *Visitation E*, its reach is not only toward the transcendent but also toward the living, the social, the corporeal, and the material—with what dies in a death, as well as what was believed to survive it. Through this dual purpose, the work can engage more closely than other kinds of reformist religiosity with the issues surrounding worldly engagement itself. In the process, it provides a tool not only of self-government and the government of the household but of civic government, reinforcing a view of the city as a dance in which all the estates of society join together even as their carefully articulated professional identities remain separate. Opening with the good death of a privileged man and its institutional and literary consequences, the chapter ends with a representation of the good death of London as a whole.

The Whittington Almshouse

Come 3e, the blessid of my fadir, take 3e in possessioun the kyngdoom
maad redi to 3ou fro the makyng of the world. For Y hungride, and 3e
3aven [gave] me to ete; Y thristide, and 3e 3aven me to drynke; Y was
herboreles [shelterless], and 3e herboriden me; nakid, and 3e hiliden me;
siik, and 3e visitiden me; Y was in prisoun, and 3e camen to me.

(Matthew 25:35–36)²⁵

The almshouse, the late medieval successor of the hospital, Langland's "mesondieux," has links to almost all the deeds Christ describes as criteria for salvation and, perhaps for this reason, had

special attraction for late medieval English merchants. As R. M. Clay demonstrates in her classic study of medieval hospitals, it was the “old merchant princes” or prominent townsfolk who were responsible for most of the houses for the poor built in the late medieval period.²⁶ The Whittington almshouse has been evoked in discussions of changing attitudes toward the poor in late medieval England, as evidence of an increased desire for social control inherent in alms being given only to the “deserving” poor; and, indeed, the ordinances emphasize that only “discrete and humble” poor should be admitted to the house.²⁷ But more significantly, the ordinances’ main emphasis is that the community should be made up primarily of those Londoners who have been brought low through no fault of their own but by fortune’s whim. The house is “namely [especially] to provide for suche pouer persones whiche grevous penurie and cruelle fortune have oppressed and be not of power to gete their lyvyng either by craft or by eny other bodily labour,” whose difficult lives might be described through the language of “tregedie” used in the ordinances envoy.²⁸ Working daily in a culture of exchange, competition, and speculation, London merchants knew well the ups and downs of fortune. As was also true of the gifts of money and food to those who got behind on their payments serving time in Ludgate, the debtors’ jail, another popular civic choice of almsgiving, there is a significant element of recognition between the “merchant prince” founders of almshouses and their inmates.

The efficiency of the almshouse form as a way of fulfilling the corporal works of mercy may in part explain its attraction for London merchants and merchant guilds. But almshouses also have a specific relationship to issues of mercantile profit and Christian morality. As the anxiety expressed by *Piers Plowman* about mercantile salvation suggests, the figure of the merchant had long been disruptive of traditional estate models of medieval society, not least because he was associated with the sin of usury: the sin of “selling time” or “making gold breed” through buying goods and selling them at a profit. Providing for the poor was a particularly effective means by which merchants could raise their moral profile. In order to be both just and merciful, the successful merchant, such as Whittington, needed to recirculate his enormous wealth back into the common good, because, as theologians such as Aquinas argued, “according to natural law goods that are held in superabundance by some people should be used for the maintenance of the poor.” Riches not put back into public circulation are tantamount to stolen goods: “It is the bread of the poor which you are holding back; it is the clothes of the naked which you are hoarding; it is the relief and liberation of the wretched which you are thwarting by burying your money away,” he adds.²⁹ The

institution of the almshouse by Whittington's executors gave concrete form to the idea that the wealthy merchant is a mere steward of his property and riches in the same way bishops, abbots, and monks are stewards of the collective Christian wealth of the great monastic and secular religious foundations. As the author of the early fifteenth-century *Dives and Pauper* has the Pauper figure explain, "alle þat þe ryche man hat pasynge hys honest lyvyng aftir þe degre of hys dispensacioun [disposable wealth], it is oþir mennys & nout hese [not his], & he schal ȝevyn wol harde rekenyng [a very strict accounting] þerof at þe dom [Judgment].... For riche men and lordys in þis world ben Godys balyys [bailiffs] & Godys revys [reeves] to ordeynyn [provide] for þe pore folc & for to susteynyn þe pore folc."³⁰ The almshouse foundation redistributes Whittington's surplus wealth back into the London community by means of "visible participation in an economic logic ... that had both a sense of civic solidarity and mystic unification."³¹ The Whittington almshouse thus fits into a traditional pattern, one with its origins in patristic and scholastic work on the "problem" of excess wealth, private property, and mercantile exchange.

However, although much of the theological logic expressed by the Whittington almshouse had been worked out in full by the thirteenth century, in several respects it remains a consciously innovative project: one indeed typical of Whittington projects in the thoroughness with which it rearticulates existing institutional and ethical models along specifically fifteenth-century lines. According to the ordinances this is true, first, of how it understands and treats its beneficiaries. On the one hand, the inhabitants of "goddeshowse or Almeshous or the Hospitall of Richard Whittington"—"of men alonly [only] or of men or women to giddre after the sadde discrecion & good conscience of Th'overseers"³²—are enjoined to behave as traditional recipients of charity, living like members of any semireligious community and praying often for their founders. "Nedye, devowte and honeste in Conversation and Lyvinge,"³³ they are to reside in the house, wear its uniform, eat meals together, submit to fines if they misbehave, attend several services a day, and say prayers, alone and together, for their benefactors—including Whittington and his parents, his wife, Alice, and her parents, and Whittington's own early patrons, Richard II and Thomas of Woodstock.³⁴ After compline, the whole community must gather at the tomb of Whittington and his wife in the church to "sey for the soules of alle cristen people" the *De profundis* and other prayers, ending with "God have mercy on oure founders soules and alle cristen," said "openly in Englissh."³⁵ Besides being under the pastoral care of the college and its master, the bedesmen are under the moral, as well as practical, control of their own tutor, chosen by the

“conservatours,” first the executors, later the “maistres,” of the Mercers’ guild. Exercising the quasi-sacerdotal role of teacher by word and example, the tutor is charged to be zealous “to edifie and norisshe charite & peas amonge his felawes and also to shew, with alle businesse bothe in word and deed, ensamples of clenness and vertue.”³⁶ A good deal is done, that is, to ensure that these “pouer persones” on whose prayers Whittington’s soul depends and for whose own souls he still shares responsibility from beyond the grave act the role of the patient poor as they should.

On the other hand, the detailed arrangements made for the bedesmen are also suggestive of a concern to emphasize their personal spiritual responsibility, to treat them as agents, not patients. Not only do they have freedom to move around the city and spend most of their time as they please, their individual living arrangements are not monastic or semireligious but collegiate or, perhaps, Carthusian. While it is the duty of any bedesmen “myghty and hole of body” to minister to the “seke and feble” in any way that may be necessary, each bedesman lives alone, with a fireplace, latrine, and other domestic appurtenances. Moreover, the almshouse is expected to provide various kinds of space for contemplative retirement: “Also, we woll and ordeyn that every persone of hem now Tutor and pouer folk and successours have a place by him self within the seid Almeshous. That is to sey a Celle or a litell house with a chymene and a pryvey and other necessities in the whiche he shalle lyegge and rest.... Whan they be in hir forseid houses or Celles aforeseid and also in the cloistres and other places of the seid almeshouse have hem self quietly and pesably, without noise or disturbance of his felawes, and that they occupie hem self in prayer or reding or in labor of hir hondes or in som other honest ocupacion.”³⁷ Apart from enjoining them to use the very simple Psalter of Our Lady (“thries L [three times fifty] Ave maria with xv pater noster and iij Credes”)³⁸ in praying for their patrons, the ordinances do not lay out any spiritual regime for the bedesmen, who in practice included “pouer folk” from a range of social backgrounds, unsuccessful members of the Mercers’ guild, retired choristers and lay clerks from St. Michael’s, and others, some of them with very limited literacy.³⁹ But alongside the well-established arrangements for a traditional, disciplined lay community of the poor, these more novel arrangements build into the institution a set of assumptions about the need for individual spiritual self-government that we have seen to be a hallmark of the death discourse of the period. Whittington’s role as paterfamilias of the almshouse and its inhabitants is not only to care for their temporal and eternal needs but to give them the chance to exercise care over their own souls, to take responsibility not only for maintaining the communitarian values of

peace, love, and “cheritee,” but for themselves.

The second innovative feature of the Whittington almshouse also concerns laicization, for the institution is well known among historians of philanthropy as one of England’s earliest “secular” charitable institutions, whose creation and administration remained in lay, not ecclesiastic, hands.⁴⁰ The ordinances give various roles to the nearby college of priests and its master, who say daily services in St. Michael’s Paternoster, lead the prayers for the souls of the benefactors, and have the right to fill every seventh vacancy at the almshouse.⁴¹ But whereas before the fifteenth century most hospitals for the poor were under direct supervision by clergy or Augustinian canons,⁴² here full control of the almshouse remains, first, with John Carpenter as lead executor, later with the “conservatours” (the Mercers’ guild).⁴³ Ecclesiastical involvement in the day-to-day running of the almshouse is kept to a minimum.

As with most projects connected to the Whittington estate, the specific arrangements that allowed the almshouse to retain its lay status were the business of John Carpenter, whose prompt pursuance of a charter of incorporation for the almshouse provided one of the legal instruments by which Whittington’s private riches were translated, as the theology of almsgiving demanded, into communal wealth. In 1432, soon after finally settling its endowment, Carpenter obtained a foundation charter for the almshouse from the Crown, making it into a legal “person,” empowered to hold property in perpetual succession: one of the first nonreligious institutions in England to use this juridical tool.⁴⁴ Carpenter’s incorporation protected the almshouse from the possibility that the Mercers might one day seek to sell it piecemeal, or that its moneys might be alienated by a sovereign strapped for funds. Allowing the almshouse to dispense with the expensive need for the license usually required when wealth passed from private individuals into the hands of a perpetual body, this “mortmain” arrangement also allowed the almshouse to profit from the good deaths of future merchants, duly dispersing their own winnings to the poor through this institutionalized form of the works of mercy.⁴⁵ Finally, it allowed Carpenter to invest the bedesmen with a measure of formal control over the institution’s legal status, as expressed by the keeping of the charter of incorporation and the common seal within the house itself: “We wille and ordeyne also that the seid Tutor and pour folke have a comyn chest and a Comyn seale in whiche chest thei shalle putte the said Seal. Also their chartres, lettres, privilegis, Escrites, and Tresour of theire seid house and other thinges whiche shalle seme to the seid Tutor and pouer folk expedient for the commyn profit of the seid place; whiche chest we wille be put in a secreet and a sekir [secure]

place with ynne the boundes of the seid hous.” The chest was to have three keys: one held by the tutor, one by the eldest member of the house, the third by “oon of the othir felawes of the seid Almeshous every yere to be new chosen by us while we lyve, and after our discesse by the maisters of the Mercerie.”⁴⁶ This system parallels similar arrangements not only at the London Guildhall and at Oxford and Cambridge colleges but also at the Whittington college of priests, emphasizing the separateness of the two institutions from a jurisdictional point of view, and thus the exclusively spiritual nature of the care exercised by the members of the college over the bedesmen next door. In 1410, only a little over a decade before the almshouse was founded, a set of polemical Lollard petitions had been presented in the House of Commons arguing that almshouses should be placed under the “oversiht of goode and trewe sekulers,” since “preestes and clerkes ... have full nyh [very nearly] distroyed all the houses off almesse withinne the rewne.”⁴⁷ Although the Whittington almshouse was created with private money, not through the ecclesiastical disendowment advocated by the Lollard petitions, and although it is far from expressing their virulent anticlericalism, Carpenter’s careful legal arrangements appear to reflect a similar view of how institutions of this kind should be managed.

As an engine of prayer and exclusive mausoleum for London’s richest citizen, the Whittington almshouse is in another sense an explicitly anti-Lollard project, for the Lollard understanding of how almshouses should work is aggressively antihierarchic and communitarian. According to the seventh of the “Twelve Conclusions,” presented to Parliament and nailed to the door of St. Paul’s and Westminster Abbey in 1395, in contemporary England “special preyeris for dede men soulis mad in oure chirche preferryng on be name [one by name] more þan anothir”—a system on which “alle almes houses of Ingelond ben wikkidly i-groundid”—represents a “false ground of almesse dede.” Instead of being the economic product of a private arrangement founded in mutual self-interest, “þe preyere of value” should spring “out of perfyth charite” and “enbrace in general alle þo [those] þat God wolde have savid,” not small groups of privileged individuals.⁴⁸ The daily prayers said at the services in St. Michael’s and at the Whittington tombstone enfold “the soules of alle cristen people”—a broader formulation than the Lollard “alle þo þat God wolde have savid”—and by enriching the city’s liturgical round, more generally “augment the divine cult” to the same end.⁴⁹ But a key feature of all the Whittington death projects as articulated by Carpenter and his fellow executors is their repeated linkage of works of charity with his exemplary and singular name. During the 1420s and 1430s, the Whittington arms appeared as a sign of his charity in

buildings all across the city, from the almshouse and college themselves to various locations at the Guildhall, to a chantry chapel at St. Paul's, to the south gate of St. Bartholomew's hospital, where they were placed near a stained glass window representing the seven works of bodily mercy.⁵⁰ These emblems serve a hortatory function, as signs of the enduring, virtuous presence of a figure who was represented as effectively London's new founding father. But they also appeal, mutely, for the prayers of London's citizens, turning the entire community, from one perspective, into a giant chantry or almshouse dedicated to the salvation of a single individual.

However, the third and most innovative feature of the Whittington almshouse, its close ties to an ambitious college of secular priests, goes a long way toward addressing Lollard attacks on private charity, even as it associates the institution with what became one of London's most powerful engines of reformist orthodoxy. Whittington college, which was run under the same general structure of lay oversight as the almshouse, was envisaged partly as a place of prayer for the souls of Whittington and his wife, composed like a large chantry chapel of "five or six perpetual chaplains" under a master, partly as an adjunct and spiritual support to the almshouse as it carried out its fundamentally similar purpose.⁵¹ But it was stipulated from the start that the priests be highly educated as well as virtuous ("viris bene literatis et virtuosis") and that the master, ex officio rector of the parish and obliged to be resident, be a doctor of divinity ("in sacra theologia graduatum"), thus adding St. Michael's Paternoster to the growing group of London parishes in the spiritual care of advanced graduates of Oxford or Cambridge, who, especially from the 1430s on, formed part of the church's first line of defense against Lollardy in the nation's capital.⁵²

It appears to have taken some time to find a master who met this qualification.⁵³ A few years after its foundation, however, the college was fortunate enough to attract—perhaps through Carpenter's well-connected relative also called John Carpenter, master of the hospital of St. Anthony's of Vienne on Threadneedle Street, later bishop of Worcester⁵⁴—the first in a tightly knit series of three brilliant masters, all from outside London, who successively positioned themselves at the center of efforts to promote the religious education of lay Londoners, not just in their immediate environs but throughout the city.⁵⁵ This was the vigorously evangelical Reginald Pecock, always anxious (as he states in his *Donet*) to be "a profitable procutoure to lay men" by communicating religious truth through his own vernacular books, some of which may have been written while he was at the college and which are shot through with references to the spaces and rituals of London and to the Mercers themselves.⁵⁶ Pecock's defense of

orthodoxy against the biblicism of the Lollards, with their seductive claim (as he puts it in *The Repressor of Over Much Blaming of the Clergy*) that “whate ever Cristen man or womman be meke in spirit ... schal without fail and defaut fynde the trewe undirstonding of Holi Scripture,” worked by promulgating a carefully stepped program of education aimed at the universal human faculty of the reason and thus in principle accessible to the laity, as to others.⁵⁷ Although Pecock does not specify its intended readership in detail, the title of one of his books, the *Pore Men’s Mirror*, written for “þe persone poorist in haver [possession] and in witt,” exploits his public position as the curate of poor bedesmen and could have been designed for reading at the almshouse.⁵⁸ Whether or not this is so, the premise of his entire vernacular oeuvre, that individual laypeople at all levels of wealth and education need to be equipped to understand church doctrine and ethics for themselves, is congruent with the principle of lay spiritual self-governance represented by the almshouse’s architecture, regime, and institutional arrangements. The theological controversies that finally brought him down derive from his later years as a bishop in the 1450s, by which time his emphasis on lay spiritual self-care may have been coming to seem radical.⁵⁹ But in much of his surviving work Pecock writes as a Londoner and master of the college, working within the nexus of the alliance between civic authority and priestly learning that Whittington’s project enabled.

Both Pecock’s successors, Thomas Eborall (Eyburhale), master from 1444, and William Ive, master from 1464, were also concerned with the defense of orthodoxy. Eborall was a member of a 1452 commission to examine for heresy works belonging to Andrew Teye; according to a note in one manuscript of the Wycliffite New Testament, “doctor Thomas Eborall and doctor Yve” were both asked to “oversee and read” the book “or þat [before] my modir bought hit.” Eborall also defended himself and other London rectors against the attacks his predecessor, Pecock, launched against the powerful civic preaching culture of the 1440s: the first of a number of incidents, shortly after Carpenter’s death, in which the anti-Lollard orthodoxy embodied by the college and, more generally, the city’s educated secular clergy turned on itself.⁶⁰ Ive was involved in the later investigation of Pecock’s theology that led to the latter’s condemnation for heresy, as well as in the defense, with Eborall and others, of the orthodox view of Church custodianship of Christian possessions against a strong challenge from the London Carmelites.⁶¹ Surviving items from Eborall’s library show his self-understanding as an upholder of civic orthodoxy and interest in the craft of preaching and in vernacular instruction, two other concerns shared by both men.⁶² Eborall owned a copy of the fourteenth-century compilation

Pore Caitif, as did Carpenter's friend John Colop: the devout stationer at the heart of the scheme to circulate books of vernacular theology among the laity for "common profit" through deathbed bequests, who lived his last years on Whittington's properties next to the college. Like the *Pore Men's Mirror*, *Pore Caitif*, which offers to "teche simple men and wymmen of gode wille the right way to hevene ... withouten multiplicacion of many bokes" by providing a stepped spiritual education beginning "atte grounde of helthe, that is Cristen mennes bileve," is of clear relevance to the officially poor almshouse bedesmen.⁶³

Through its sister foundation, the college of priests, the spiritual reach of the almshouse was thus broader than its private focus on Whittington's soul would suggest, reaching out beyond the carefully selected group of poor folk in the almshouse and the parish of St. Michael's Paternoster to become a spiritual resource for the entire city. Its members supposedly especially learned and chaste, the college became part of a larger movement, headed by substantial lay Londoners such as Carpenter and the other Whittington executors, to nurture and reform pastoral care in the city, to affirm orthodoxy, and to combat heresy by sustaining the "trewre preestis" the author of the *E Visitation* imagines as worthy to hear a dying person's confession. The heart of the reformist religious and literary culture of the city from its inception into the second half of the century, Whittington college represents an extraordinary public answer to the charge of spiritual selfishness leveled against "wikkidly i-groundid" almshouses by the "Twelve Conclusions," to the call for a disinterested, "parfyth charite" that accompanied the charge, and to Wycliffite radicalism itself. Here, the legitimate but perilous financial surplus at the heart of the merchant enterprise finds its ambitious charitable outlet not in the bodily works of mercy but the spiritual ones, not only in prayers but in preaching. Whittington's money is poured out not prudently, for the benefit of his own soul and the souls of his bedesmen, but evangelically and in "parfyth charite," to enrich the intellectual and spiritual fabric of the whole of London.

The London Guildhall

The Whittington almshouse and its neighboring college thus offer one careful answer to the question of how a London citizen should die. The answer is grounded in traditional theology and institutions in ways that had come under fierce reformist criticism a generation earlier: in Whittington's responsibilities to enrich his parish church; his responsibility to recirculate his wealth to the poor from whom,

ethically speaking, it had been borrowed; the spiritual benefits of posthumous works of mercy; and the efficacy of the prayers of his beneficiaries, both bedesmen and priests at the college in their capacity as chantry priests, in speeding him through purgatory. On this ground, however, Carpenter and the other executors built an innovative foundation that affirmed two specifically contemporary religious ideals: the responsibility even of poor Christians of limited education to see to their own spiritual destinies; and that of the wealthy lay paterfamilias to concern himself with the spiritual, as well as temporal, governance of his household, in this case very widely construed as comprising, potentially, the whole populace. Through the writings of Pecock, the preaching of Eborall and Ive, and the responsibility all three men took for the city's orthodoxy, part of Whittington's surplus wealth was translated into works of preaching and teaching still visibly under his auspices. The Whittington arms became a marker not only of the city's prosperity and of its concern to yield a spiritual account of that prosperity through the institution-building performance of the works of bodily mercy but of a zealous reformist orthodoxy.

Despite the absence of specific attention paid the problem of merchant wealth in *Visitation E* and its manuscript companions, a general affinity between the Whittington almshouse project and the theological and pedagogical priorities of these works is unmistakable. Indeed, one of the three copies of *Visitation E* that I discussed as household miscellanies in the previous chapter, Bodley 938, copied by one of the scribes of John Colop's "common profit" book, Cambridge University Library MS Ff.6.31, has at least this indirect link to the almshouse. Many of the shorter works in Bodley 938, such as the *Schort Reule of Lif*, the expositions of the Paternoster, and *Visitation E* itself, make obvious sense within the ambit of the almshouse.⁶⁴

In discharging his religious responsibilities as Whittington's executor, then, Carpenter worked within an ethical paradigm in which virtuous acts are understood in relation to their final, eternal, purposes. This is clearly true of the almshouse and college, directed at the salvation, by more than one means, both of Whittington and of the citizenry of London. It is true of the other large project associated with the Whittington foundation: the library it was used to create at the Guildhall, within the complex that housed the city government, which collected mainly religious materials for the use of the city's secular clergy and educated lay citizens. Carpenter took a special interest in this library, administering it personally and leaving it an unknown number of books in his will with twenty shillings to the bishop of London, Robert Gilbert, only if he had the will proved without taking a formal inventory of "goods and chattels."⁶⁵ It is true of a number of

smaller projects—for example, Carpenter’s reestablishment, through the Whittington estate, of a decayed chantry chapel dedicated to the Virgin Mary facing St. Paul’s at the northeast corner of the churchyard and situated above a charnel containing centuries of remains of London citizens and the tombs of three mayors.⁶⁶ In an extended sense, it is even true of the Whittington estate’s contributions to secular building projects, such as the major expansion of the Guildhall itself that made its main hall, home of the city’s Court of Husting, one of the largest in the country, second only to Westminster. Signed as a Whittington project by the incorporation of his arms into the stained glass windows of the new mayoral courtroom, the new building had as its “public face” an elaborate porch at its south end, graced with sculptures of Christ as ruler, overseeing Law and Learning as they in turn oversee female figures representing the cardinal virtues trampling their contrary vices.⁶⁷ Mayoral justice, its role the maintenance of Discipline, Justice, Fortitude, and Temperance, thus becomes a manifestation of divine justice, whose end is not civic but eternal order;⁶⁸ Whittington, as always under the posthumous auspices of his great promoter, Carpenter, affirms the city’s identity as a representation not only of Troynovaunt but of the city in which he hopes to lay his own stone, once it has been sufficiently polished through penitential almsgiving, the New Jerusalem.

Yet Carpenter’s engagements with the questions surrounding the civic good death did not end with his activities as Whittington’s executor, or even with the scrupulous arrangements he made for his own death, as reflected in his will. As London’s common clerk for over twenty years, the heart of the city’s government and the head of the cadre of clerks that constituted a key part of its staff, he also had other opportunities to engage with the ideas and ideals associated with death, and to use them toward the city’s institutional, moral, spiritual, and artistic enrichment, as well as, more concretely, its perpetuation. As we saw, the envoy of the English translation of the almshouse ordinances represents Whittington’s death as a “tregedie” and in so doing imagines the foundation under the complex sign of Fortuna. Fortuna was the threatening benefactor of a city of enormous wealth, divided into competing, loud, and often violent interest groups: a city still struggling to replace the population lost in the decimation of the fourteenth-century plagues; worried about storms at sea, price competition, and international shipping routes; worried, also, about the eternal implications of its worldly success; and all too aware that its liberties, granted by William the Conqueror, were held at the pleasure of the Crown.⁶⁹

Just as the eternal fate of Whittington was the spiritual responsibility of Carpenter and his fellow executors, so the worldly

fate of London was the professional responsibility of Carpenter and his fellow Guildhall clerks, a well-salaried and educated group whose office, in existence in some form since the early days of the city commune, saw to the day-to-day running of the city and its court, and the copying and preservation of the documents on which its power and longevity depended.⁷⁰ Unlike the mayor and sheriffs, who were all elected annually, the city clerks had career tenure: as record keepers and senior officials, the clerks worked in the newly enlarged government building and constituted the city's institutional memory.⁷¹ In this sense they differed from the royal clerks such as Thomas Hoccleve, whose concerns are often seen as typifying the "emergent bureaucratic class" of the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries, whose Westminster offices were no longer physically part of the king's household, whose professional ambitions and hopes of patronage often went unrealized as a result, and whose salaries were constantly in arrears.⁷² As a short poem by Hoccleve, which begs Carpenter's help in managing his messy financial affairs, allows us to infer, the city clerks' relationship to power and money tended to be practical and managerial, focused on the smooth running of a mercantile community that by definition could not take Boethius's advice and step off fortune's wheel:

See heer my maistre Carpenter, I yow preye,
How many chalenges [claims] ageyn me be;
And I may nat delivre hem [pay them] by no weye,
So me werreyeth [wars against me] coynes scarsetee,
That ny [near] Cousin is to necessitee;
For why [for which reason] unto yow seeke I for refut
[refuge],
Which þat of confort am ny destitut.⁷³

The royal clerks at the Chancery and the Privy Seal are notable, among other things, for their consolidation and elaboration of a Chaucerian and broadly secular poetics, in response, so Ethan Knapp argues, to their precarious career of dependence on the turbulent dynamics of the court.⁷⁴ The intellectual and literary culture of the two groups overlapped, not least in their joint concern for the relationship between permanence and impermanence, textuality, fortune, and death. Nonetheless, the writing, book ownership, and poetic patronage associated with the city clerks at the Guildhall has a different, institutionally more grounded and philosophically confident flavor.⁷⁵

The best-known product of the textual culture of the early fifteenth-century Guildhall, giving one account of its attitude to such

themes, is Carpenter's main surviving written work, the massive *Liber albus*: a compilation of the city's customs produced in 1419–21, early in his career as common clerk, some two years before he was appointed Whittington's executor.⁷⁶ Perhaps produced in emulation of the *Liber Horn*, by Andrew Horn, the early fourteenth-century city chamberlain who was Carpenter's most ambitious predecessor in the Guildhall bureaucracy, the *Liber albus* is an exhaustive attempt to organize all the archival material surviving since the founding of London; to set down the customs of the city, as they pertain to the distribution and passing on of power in the city's government; and to detail the history and duties of the elected governors and officials who make up the civic hierarchy. Before this project was undertaken during Whittington's final term as mayor, Carpenter notes in his prohemium, many of the city's customs had been written down "without order or arrangement," or in some instances not at all, rendering them constantly vulnerable to the unexpected and irresistible power of death. Because "the fallibility of human memory and the shortness of life do not allow us to gain an accurate knowledge of everything that deserves remembrance," unless knowledge is recorded in highly codified form, and because death often comes suddenly to the "aged, most experienced, and most discreet rulers of the royal City of London," causing disruption to their successors, it is crucial to have in writing the details of the city's elaborate ritual and legal life.⁷⁷ Civic violence, such as had broken out on several occasions during the 1380s, threatens from within; impingement on the city's liberties, especially on the part of church and Crown, threatens from without. If London, whose nickname Troynovaunt signifies its perpetual peril as well as its glory, is to stave off the fate of its ancestor, proper procedure must be visibly and repetitively followed in elections, legal proceedings, and the many processions through the city by which the mayor and his retinue physically affirmed its prerogatives. According to the *Liber albus*, given the deaths of the individual bodies who take part in these rituals, only a depersonalized, abstracted, and scrupulously cross-referenced set of written records can ensure the perpetual survival, across a series of "dying generations," of the city as a corporate body.

Taken on its own, the *Liber albus* suggests a potent but also a narrow and secular understanding of death as a civic theme and of Carpenter's professional relationship to that theme. Yet it is clear from the rebuilt Guildhall itself, with its theological library, its college of priests, and its iconographic representation of the heavenly roots of mayoral justice over its south porch, that the group of lay city clerks headed by Carpenter had a more capacious sense of civic textuality than this book suggests. If we look at a second document that reflects

a different aspect of the textual culture of the city clerks, Carpenter's will, written twenty years after the *Liber albus*, presumably in the early 1440s, we get a broader picture of his concerns and those of his most important textual community. In the process, we also encounter a discourse of death that has somewhat different roots from the reformist discourse associated with *The Visitation of the Sick* and similar texts, one whose combination of worldly and transcendent interests, shaped by early Christian humanism, makes it peculiarly suitable to the mercantile civic culture of London.

Aside from detailing his funeral arrangements and listing moneys and goods to be given to his wife, Katherine, his relatives, and his extensive household, Carpenter's will mainly consists of gifts, mostly in the form of books, to two groups: rectors and other secular ecclesiasts and past and present city clerks.⁷⁸ The gifts to ecclesiasts begin with a general bequest of "good or rare" Latin theological books selected from his collection by Reginald Pecock, then master of Whittington college, and William Litchfield, preacher, writer, and rector of All Hallows the Great, to be chained in "the common library at Guildhall, for the profit of the students there, and those discoursing to the common people."⁷⁹ Other books go to individuals, specifically to activist secular clergy of the older generation.⁸⁰ Carpenter's relative, the future bishop of Worcester, John Carpenter, receives a book on architecture.⁸¹ William Byngham, rector of St. John Zachary and founder of a school at Cambridge (later Christ's College) meant to remedy the "grete scarstee of maistres of Gramer," receives Roger Dymock's response to the Lollard "Twelve Conclusions," with its careful defense of the theology of the almshouse. John Neel, master of the hospital of St. Thomas of Acres in Cheapside, receives one of two copies of the pseudo-Aristotelian *Secreta secretorum* and Innocent III's *De miseria conditionis humanae*: these contrasting but (in a hospital context) equally useful books on bodily and moral regimes, the first remedial, the second ascetic, had been, with "other notable things," left to Carpenter by his own predecessor at the Guildhall, John Marchaunt.⁸² Pecock, Litchfield, Carpenter, Byngham, and Neel were all involved in initiatives to establish and staff choir and grammar schools, with a particular eye to raising the level of liturgical training of London's choristers and lay clerks, many of whom sang in chantry chapels like the one Carpenter endowed at the Guildhall for the salvation of his own soul, with four choristers ("Carpenter's children") under a tutor.⁸³ Like many of Carpenter's labors for the Whittington foundations, especially the almshouse and the chantry chapel at the St. Paul's charnel, the networks suggested by these names and gifts speak to an interest in the educational and liturgical life of the city: a concern to promote religious orthodoxy, the correct performance of

the divine *cultus*, and the prayerful commemoration of the city's dead that both parallels and supplements the concern for civic ceremonial displayed in the *Liber albus*.

The gifts to clerks, which provide a unique glimpse into the reading culture of the educated laymen in charge of London's legal, financial, and textual resources, go to nine members of the offices of the common clerk and the city chamberlain, households long closely associated with one another. For the most part, these are works of moral philosophy and theology, in some cases written within the genre of the *Fürstenspiegel* or *Mirror for Princes* tradition, including several dating from the previous seventy-five years. Two chamberlain clerks, William Chedworth (brother to the bishop of Lincoln and one of Carpenter's executors) and Robert Langford (Chedworth's successor),⁸⁴ respectively receive copies of Julianus Pomerius's fifth-century *De vita contemplativa*, on the relationship between teaching, contemplation, and the practice of virtue, and "a book of mine called *Speculum morale regium* made for a sometime king of France." This is probably the mirror for princes written for Charles VI in the 1380s by the late fourteenth-century Dominican archbishop of Sens, Robert Gervais, "useful for observing how a king or governor may be excellent and famous and virtuous and glorious and for contemplating the summit of the rule of kingly majesty and its function and reward."⁸⁵ Like Alain de Lille's late twelfth-century *Anticlaudianus*, left to Carpenter's former clerk and family friend Richard Mordan, and Christine de Pizan's *Livre du corps de policie*, with its vigorous interest in the role of the merchant class in the calamitous politics of early fifteenth-century France, left to another former clerk, Richard Lovell, these texts are in different ways concerned with the place of virtues in the ordered polity and in "imagining the perfect ruler."⁸⁶ Accordingly, they suggest in general terms the moral seriousness with which Carpenter and his fellow clerks understood the theological theory of civic authority displayed iconographically on the south porch of the Guildhall, with its positioning of Learning and Law between the cardinal virtues below and Christ above, and the claims for the religious role of city government this iconography implies.

The books given to a third chamberlain's clerk, Richard Blount, are suggestive in more specific ways, since they include not only more works broadly in the "advice to rulers" tradition—Carpenter's other *Secreta secretorum*, bound with Petrus Alfonsi's exempla collection *Disciplina clericalis*—and a set of practical civic texts but also a book of ethical writings whose focus is as much on the self as on the civic. Blount is offered lifetime use of "all my books or quartos of the modes of entry and engrossing of the acts and records as well according to the common law of the realm as the custom of the city of London"—a

loose gathering of texts like those Carpenter had shaped into the *Liber albus*—provided these books revert to the “chamber of the Guildhall of London, for the information of the clerks there” after his decease.⁸⁷ But he is also given outright another book, “my little book *De Parabolis Solamonis, Ecclesiasticus, Seneca ad Callionum, De remediis utriusque fortunae*, and *De quatuor virtutibus cardinalibus*”: perhaps a compilation containing glossed copies of two biblical wisdom books, Proverbs and Ecclesiasticus, and a cluster of three closely related works of moral theology or philosophy, two ancient, one modern.⁸⁸ The ancient works, Martin of Braga’s brief account of the role of the cardinal virtues in the life of the ruler, *Formula vitae honestae*, and the *De remediis fortuitorum bonorum*, were widely assumed to be by Seneca. The modern work, by far the longest text in the book, is the *De remediis utriusque fortunae*: the most widely circulated of the writings of Francis Petrarch, of special interest here for its explicitly theological deployment of the concept of fortune to structure a set of reflections on ethical living in the face of change and death.⁸⁹

Represented as a response to the pseudo-Senecan *De remediis fortuitorum bonorum* and its failure to consider remedies for anything other than the “bad face” of fortune, Petrarch’s *De remediis* was written for the once powerful and still wealthy Azzo da Correggio, deposed lord of Parma and governor of Verona, whose “very circumstances ... illustrate abundantly the ups and downs of Fortune,” as well as for the “many strung up on the rack of Fortune, many showered with riches, and many being whirled around on her wheel with great force.”⁹⁰ The treatise, a long series of brief dialogues between Reason and Joy and Hope on the one hand, Sorrow and Fear on the other, is in two parts, both of which represent the “unpredictable and sudden changes” of human affairs as an “ever present war with *Fortuna*, in which only virtue can make us victorious.”⁹¹ The first, in which Reason counters Joy and Hope’s expressions of pleasure in beauty, long life, wealth, position, health, prestige, political success, and so on with the Stoic reminder that all such worldly goods are passing, focuses intently on the spiritual and existential problems attendant on good fortune. Many have “endured losses, poverty, exile, imprisonment, torture, death, and grave illnesses worse than death,” but Petrarch has “yet to see one who could bear well riches, honors, and power.”⁹² The second, in which Reason seeks to dissuade Sorrow and Fear from reacting negatively to various misfortunes—from loss of social standing, poverty, and sickness to cramped quarters in which some are forced to live—with variations of the same reminder that lack of worldly goods is in reality lack of nothing, focuses on the myriad ways in which good fortune is subject to natural decline, sudden reversal, and a constant sense of

insufficiency.⁹³ As a whole, the work, which we might understand as a humanist extension of the mirror for princes tradition, aims to teach those who are in any number of senses rulers to keep themselves at an emotional remove from the world, arguing that such a steadfast rational and virtuous attitude to fortune is what makes good government possible.

The *De remediis* culminates in an extended memento mori, which is presented as an antidote to both unreasonable pleasure in prosperity and unreasonable pain in misfortune at once.⁹⁴ This resolution to the problem of fortune is influenced not only by Stoics such as Seneca and Cicero, who encouraged *melete thanatou* as a means to detach from the external world, but also by the early writings of Augustine, for whom *meditatio mortis* is similarly the key to attaining virtue, the reorientation of cognition from self and world toward the true apprehension of God.⁹⁵ In Petrarch's treatise, Reason argues that "death calls not for fear but for contemplation," because only in constant meditation on mortality can humans know themselves as temporal, created beings: "The most harmful of all human ills is to forget about God, yourself, and death. These three are so intimately connected that one can hardly consider them separately."⁹⁶ Meditation on death encourages a religiously correct and philosophically dispassionate attitude toward wealth and prosperity, as borrowed, not owned—the status, as we have seen, of merchant wealth in particular, according to *Dives and Pauper*.⁹⁷ At death, riches "will return to whence they came, namely, Fortune's hands. And from there they will pass again and again, from one to the other, and never stay with anyone for long" because "all this time you have had the use of someone else's goods. Nothing of your own is being taken away from you, but only what you borrowed and are finished using is being called back."⁹⁸ In dying, humans join a great mortality community, as "those who stand around your bed, those who you saw before, those you heard of, read about, or could have known, and all those others, either born before or to be born, any place, any time, in the future, they all have taken or shall take this journey."⁹⁹ The daily contemplation of death is presented here, at the culmination of the work, as the ultimate means by which to counter both of fortune's two faces, the good and the bad.

With the *De remediis*, we arrive at the first of a series of death texts considered in this book to extend the uses of discourse of dying in a fashion that the religious writings discussed in [Chapter 1](#) do not obviously anticipate. Despite the influence on the *Visitation* of the neoclassical humanism of Baudri of Bourgeil, in the reformist and pragmatically oriented *Visitation* texts, as in many of the projects associated with the Whittington foundation, the final emphasis is

always, at least in theory, on the transcendent. However much they may be inflected by and reinforce social norms and hierarchies, *Visitation* texts and Whittington almshouse teach the living to die and minister to the dying for the sake of the soul's salvation. A penumbra of texts and institutions surrounding them reinforce a common ethical message that in order to die well one must renounce, in important ways, life in the active, secular world—or at least secure through almsgiving the prayers of those who have done so. The *De remediis* and other meditative texts informed by the early humanist interest in reconciling Christian and Stoic ethical teachings emphasize a somewhat different ascetic logic. Here, besides its transcendent implications, death has an explicit, thisworldly ethical function, offering early fifteenth-century London governors and citizens an approach to mortality that texts in the vein of the *Visitation* do not: a means of using the ever-present threat of death and the elaborate and laicized culture of dying growing up around it to think about *living*, rationally, in the world. As F. N. M. Diekstra notes of the partial fifteenth-century Middle English translation of the *De remediis*, although the recurring answer to fortune's dangers offered by the work generally emphasizes renunciation of worldly goods, its "detailed consideration" of these goods "is worldly in itself," constantly returning the reader to the contemplation of what must be relinquished. Petrarch's *meditatio mortis* thus becomes a way for temporal rulers and their advisors to practice moral self-government and measured mental detachment from—but while still in—the secular world.¹⁰⁰

The gift of the long and difficult Latin *De remediis* to the clerk Blount, rather than to one of Carpenter's priestly friends, testifies to the level and breadth of learning at the fifteenth-century Guildhall as well as to Carpenter's recognition that this text, however theological in orientation, belongs as much on a secular bureaucrat's shelf as on that of an ecclesiast: there to be consulted alongside the advice to rulers, the discussions of ethics and religious wisdom, and the practical materials about laws and customs evidently also seen as key resources for a civic administrator. Since the gift involves a text dedicated to the management of the reader's "goods of the body, soul, and world," it also reemphasizes Carpenter's commitment to the theme of individual lay spiritual responsibility, now understood in relation less to securing salvation as such than to the public life lived virtuously and usefully through an active, immediate knowledge of death. In dying himself, and so passing eternally beyond the influence of fortune, Carpenter took care to provide one of his younger former colleagues, still working at the Guildhall, with a tool for rectifying the hopes and fears of the self in relation to the world, one he likely used

himself and whose power to maintain virtue in civic administrators made it potentially as important a means of securing the good government of the city as the *Liber albus*.

But Carpenter's conception of the active religious responsibility civic government bore toward the city is not only the driving force behind the book donations in his will. Perhaps a decade before the will was written, it had also found artistic expression in yet another project associated with his exceptionally activist career as common clerk, and with the Guildhall's professional, literary, and religious lay culture. This is the *Daunce of Poulys* or *Dance of Death*: a series of image-texts featuring panel paintings of Death coming to members of each social estate with verses based on a translation by the great public poet of the era, John Lydgate, which Carpenter had erected in the new cloister surrounding the Pardon Churchyard, tucked between the nave and north transept of the cathedral, five hundred yards west and south of the Guildhall. The much-imitated *Daunce of Poulys*, which was destroyed in 1559, has links to the reformist religiosity of the *Visitation* and is redolent of the commitment to the dead and their ritual commemoration evident in Carpenter's work as Whittington's executor, as well as in his will. Yet the *Daunce of Poulys* was not a Whittington project but an explicitly civic one, its placement, agendas, and choice of motif all connected to the Guildhall theme of London's rights, liberties, and cultural and religious identity. Indeed, we might perhaps see the work as forming part of a diptych with the sculptures on the Guildhall south porch, offering Londoners an image of the one earthly force that cannot be contained by human justice and virtue, even under Christ, death.

"Imagine the long procession of those before you and of those after you, and your contemporaries, not small in number, who depart with you at the same hour," writes Petrarch to his princely reader; "death does not know *imperium*, does not recognize princes, and is the greatest leveler of all."¹⁰¹ Shuttling to and fro across the divide between religious and lay orders and from the high estates of pope and emperor to the low estates of labourer, child, and hermit, the *Daunce of Poulys* has a similar processional structure, as it has a similar understanding of the world as fundamentally tragic, inextricably bound as all secular people are on fortune's ever-turning wheel. As the prologue to Lydgate's "A" version of *The Dance of Death* puts it:

Dethe spareth not / low ne hye degre
Popes kynges / ne worthi Emperowrs
When thei schyne / moste in felicite
He can abate / the fresshnes of her flowres

Ther briȝt sune clipsen / with hys showres
Make hem plownge / from theire sees lowe
Maugre [despite] the myght / of al these conquerowres
Fortune hath hem / from her whele y-throwe.¹⁰²

Most important, the work shares Petrarch's civic humanism, in the sense that, despite its emphases on lay self-government and individual spiritual responsibility, its fundamental commitment is to the right ordering not of individual dying bodies but of the urban body politic as a whole. The *Daunce of Poulys* is a Guildhall project, indeed the clearest expression of early fifteenth-century civic religiosity, because, despite its dancing skeletons and its repetitive messages—death comes unawares, all must die, be ready for death—it is all about the living and the virtuous ordering and survival of London itself.

The Pardon Churchyard

The Pardon Churchyard had been in use since the thirteenth century as a burial site for the cathedral canons; its name suggests its association with forgiveness and inclusivity—in the city's "pardon" cemeteries, those who had died without the final sacraments or proper ritual oversight by a priest in times of plague or other emergencies were understood to have been granted pardon for their sins nonetheless if buried in the site.¹⁰³ Gilbert Becket, father of Thomas, one of London's patron saints, and either sheriff or portgrave (i.e., mayor), was said to be buried in the churchyard, with his wife, Anne.¹⁰⁴ Thomas More, dean of St. Paul's from 1406 to 1421, enclosed the churchyard within a cloister in the second decade of the century; by the time of his death, he had also rebuilt what John Stow in the sixteenth century calls the "faire chapell" dedicated to St. Anne and St. Thomas in its center, which was understood to house the Becket mortuary (Figure 3).¹⁰⁵ More's renovation of the Becket chapel and enclosure of the plot, setting it apart from the rest of the cathedral yard, appears to have made it newly attractive to the city's elite. Although the cathedral's main churchyard was not generally a preferred burial choice of Londoners, later in the fifteenth century the Pardon Churchyard became a popular resting place for members of wealthy and powerful lay families, as well as deans and upper-level ecclesiastics.¹⁰⁶ Stow asserts that the churchyard had the reputation of having "many persons, some of worship, and others of honour" buried there, with monuments surpassing in richness those in the cathedral itself.¹⁰⁷

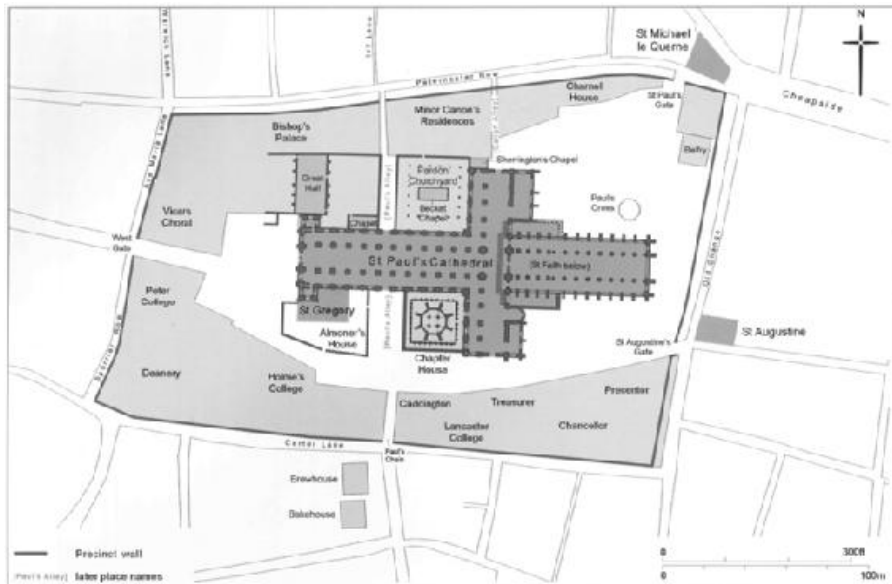


FIGURE 3. Map of Old St. Paul's by Tracy Wellman.

In *St. Paul's: The Cathedral Church of London, 604–2004*, ed. Derek Keene, Arthur Burns, and Andrew Saint (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2004), 42. Used by permission of Yale University Press.

Even before the dean's renovations, however, the Pardon Churchyard had long been a significant ritual site for London's governors, since the Becket tomb was an important destination of the mayoral processions recorded in the *Liber albus* and understood as crucial to the articulation of London's civic identity. According to this work, on the feast of St. Simon and St. Jude (October 28), the day of his election, the new mayor would ride in procession to Westminster, where he would take his oath at the Exchequer and be formally accepted in the king's name by the chancellor, treasurer, keeper of the Privy Seal, and barons of the Exchequer. After returning to the city and feasting with aldermen and upper government officers at his residence, he would process from the church of St. Thomas of Acon (i.e., Thomas Becket) in Cheapside to St. Paul's, preceded by "the commons ... in companies, arrayed in the suits of their respective mysteries," and the holders of various ceremonial and administrative offices, accompanied by his two sheriffs carrying white wands, and followed by the recorder and other aldermen, all keeping a respectful distance from the city's new governor.¹⁰⁸ At St. Paul's, the procession would first stand "between the two small doors" in the nave "to pray for the soul of Bishop William [the Norman], who ... obtained from his lordship William the Conqueror great liberties for the City of London." Then they would process to the churchyard, "where lie the

bodies of the parents of Thomas, late Archbishop of Canterbury,” saying the *De profundis* for the repose of their souls, before returning to St. Thomas of Acon and making an offering.¹⁰⁹ Variations of this procession, which sacralizes the mayoralty by linking it liturgically with a series of important heavenly patrons, concluded with a visitation of the Becket tomb in the Pardon Churchyard on seven further feast days throughout the year, all between late October and early February and many clustered around the feast of St. Thomas himself on December 29: All Saints (November 1), Christmas, St. Stephen, and St. John the Evangelist (December 25–27), Christ’s Circumcision (January 1), Epiphany (January 6), and the Purification of the Virgin (February 2).¹¹⁰

Although the *Liber albus* is not explicit about the ideological ends of the mayor’s oath procession, we might take this ritualized visit to the Becket tomb as a tacit gesture toward civil self-governance in relation to the Crown, designed to counterbalance the annual submission of the new mayor for royal approval at the Exchequer by appropriating the “triumph of the Western Church over a king of England” represented by Becket, the most important saint actually to be born in London.¹¹¹ But there was also a more local reason for appropriating the Becket family as champions of lay, civic liberties in this particular space: the need to insist on the city’s claims to a measure of authority within the precinct walls in light of continuing, often strained negotiations between St. Paul’s and the city regarding land use and rights of access. The London folkmoot, convened three times a year for the election of sheriffs and other civic functions, no longer met in St. Paul’s Yard from the 1320s on, after Edward II allowed the cathedral to enclose it, converting “public space to the uses of a quasiprivate ecclesiastical corporation”;¹¹² just after Carpenter’s death in the 1440s, the dean replaced a gate to the west of the cathedral with a set of bars and a cross, cutting off access to the precinct from Bowyer Row.¹¹³ Considered in the context of such ongoing competition regarding access to the cathedral precinct, Dean More’s enclosure of the Pardon Churchyard—which incorporated as part of the cathedral proper what had been a space of ambiguous boundaries, open to multiple uses, bordered by a major access point to the precinct, and of deep symbolic importance—called for response from London’s governors. At a basic institutional level, Carpenter’s decision to commission a dance of death for this location, at a date unknown but usually taken to have been during the early 1430s, can be understood as an attempt to make the civic governors part of this process of enclosure and so assert the city’s sacral rights and interests in the space.¹¹⁴

Like the cloister, the dance of death itself was a recent, indeed a

novel, creation, still at the beginning of its century-long career as a fashionable urban icon of the existential predicament of Christian society, copied so widely throughout northern Europe that it remains perhaps the period's most recognizable motif to this day.¹¹⁵ The earliest well-known dance of death, the *Danse macabre* had been painted at the cemetery of the Holy Innocents in Paris as recently as 1424–25, during the English occupation and regency of the Duke of Bedford, along the first ten bays of the Charnier des Lingères on the cemetery's southern wall, underneath the distinctive open skylights through which the bones of the dead could clearly be seen. The mural faced the center of the large cemetery, where a pulpit stood and which seems to have functioned as an informal market, an overflow from the city's market complex close by.¹¹⁶ The French poem that explicates the painting, giving an eight-line stanza each to Death's address to a given estate and that estate's resigned reply, is associated with the prolific religious educator and chancellor of the university Jean Gerson, who is unlikely to have written it himself but whose vernacular writings for the laity gave a key place to death and learning to die.¹¹⁷ Apparently an ecclesiastical, not a civic, production, the mural was "clearly visible from the churchyard," and faced the mixed "legitimate and illegitimate trading" associated with the space, its "commerce and disorderly behavior."¹¹⁸ A smart bit of pastoral placement, this location recalls similar religious panels containing catechetic texts hung in various public places in early fifteenth-century Paris. With its opening appeal to the "creature roysonnaable / Qui desires vie eternelle" spoken by an *auctor* who—in Guyot Marchant's 1485 woodcut edition of this long demolished image-text—instructs readers from a scholar's study, surrounded by books, the *Danse macabre* attempts to recall Parisian Christians to the awareness that they stand at the brink of eternity at a moment in which they are most likely to be engaged in disreputable worldly activities.¹¹⁹ Its emotive images, grim humor, and periodic shifts into social satire all function as megaphones, designed to attract attention in what are understood to be distracting circumstances.

By contrast, Lydgate's translation of the French text, the so-called A version of the *Dance of Death*—made, he says, while he was "takyng acqueyntaunce" of certain "frensshe clerkes" on a trip to Paris perhaps in 1426—seems initially to have been composed as a freestanding poem, without images, and with courtly or gentry readers in mind.¹²⁰ Assuming that Marchant's edition preserves the general shape of the Holy Innocents French text,¹²¹ the A version adds six new figures to the original cast of thirty-one, including four courtly women (empress, lady of great estate, abbess, and "amorous woman" or court mistress), a juror or justice of the peace, and a specific magician or "tregetour"

named “Jon Rikelle.” The effect is to shift the work away from the uniformly masculine exemplarism of the Holy Innocents mural and up the social ladder toward a high-born audience of both sexes and a relatively particularized account of the upper echelons of society. In the process, the poem appears oriented toward private meditation more than public speculation. As well as a final envoy, dedicating the work to “lordes / and maistres” and submitting it to their “correccioun,”¹²² Lydgate adds a five-stanza introduction, which explains the “entencioun” of this “pleyne translacioun // In Inglishe tunge” as allowing “prowde folkes whiche that ben stoute & bolde // As in a myrrowre / to-for[n] [as if standing in front of a mirror] yn her reasoun” clearly to “beholde” their future death, imprinting the poem’s message in their “memorialle.” Readers are thus understood to take the poem’s rational and affective message into the quiet of their hearts, rather than viewing it across a socially mixed public space. The poem’s envoy directs readers to the “daunce / at seint Innocentis” itself for a portrayal of the scenes. But it treats the images found there as unnecessary to the privatized, readerly version of the dance of death it offers.¹²³

Despite similarities of layout and placement and the inclusion of a set of panel paintings,¹²⁴ Carpenter’s commission of a London dance of death, based on a version of Lydgate’s poem, also differs in important ways from the original in Paris. Rather than facing outward into the mixed public space of St. Paul’s churchyard—a good equivalent of the cemetery of the Holy Innocents, since both the preaching site at St. Paul’s Cross and the charnel house were located there—the *Daunce of Poulys* faced inward, running all around the Pardon Churchyard on the back wall of the new cloister. This cloister was thus visually dominated by a representation of the multiple estates and jurisdictions that made up late medieval society, limning the church’s territorial claims to the space with those made by the city. The panels that repetitively juxtapose members of the religious estates with their lay equivalents emphasize the former’s place within a larger web of social structures, including the civic. Confronting not only the “faire chapell” containing the Becket mortuary but the massed bones of London’s pardoned dead, the image-text, each figure dancing with his or her own death, takes its place beside Carpenter’s other projects commemorating the London dead.

The textual tradition of the Middle English *Dance of Death* is complicated and has not yet been fully elucidated.¹²⁵ However, six of the work’s fifteen manuscripts, including the mid-fifteenth-century Lydgate collection in London, British Library Lansdowne MS 699, preserve what seems to be a revision of the poem, which partially reorders the A version (as represented, *inter alia*, by San Marino,

Huntington Library Ellesmere MS 26 A.13), omitting eleven of thirty-seven characters while adding seven or eight new ones. As I argue elsewhere, this B version seems to have been made specifically for the *Daunce of Poulys* project.¹²⁶ True, the best manuscript notice of the *Daunce of Poulys* and of Carpenter's engagement in the project, in the large, mid-fifteenth-century London anthology of Chaucer and Lydgate, Cambridge, Trinity College MS R.3.21, is attached to an elaborate copy of the A version: "This Daunce of machabre is depeynted rychly at sent innocents closter in parys in fraunce. Ere [here] foloweth the Prologe of the Daunce of Machabre translatyd by Dan John lydgate monke of Bury out of Frensshe in to englyssh whiche now is callyd the Daunce of Poulys. & these wordes paynted in þe cloystar at þe dispensys & request of Jankyn Carpenter."¹²⁷ But two B version copies also entitle the work *Daunce of Poulys*: Oxford, Corpus Christi College MS 237, and Oxford, Bodleian Library MS 686, both of them generally similar to Lansdowne 699 and its textual neighbors, Leiden, University Library MS Vosius C.G.Q. 9 and Lincoln Cathedral MS C.5.4.¹²⁸ In the late fifteenth century, Corpus Christi 237 itself belonged to a certain Edmund Carpenter, perhaps a member of the London Carpenter family.¹²⁹ A third, often variant copy of B, London, British Library Cotton Vespasian MS A.25, which has the colophon "An history & Daunce of Deathe of all estatte & degres writen in the cappell of Wortley of Wortley Hall" and for much of its length follows the Lansdowne 699 cast of characters and order, may have been transcribed directly from a wall painting modeled on the *Daunce of Poulys*.¹³⁰ The B version lacks the translator's literary prologue and epilogue, both of doubtful pertinence to a public wall painting, consisting instead of a two-stanza introduction, a two- or three-stanza conclusion, and thirty-three or thirty-four portraits to a total of thirty-five or thirty-six units of image-text, nine or so to each cloister wall.

Moreover, differences between the A and B versions clearly suggest revisions undertaken with the instruction and representation of a powerful London civic audience in mind. In common with all the other complete B version manuscripts, Lansdowne 699 reduces the number of courtly figures in the A version from twelve to eight, compressing the squire and knight into one portrait and omitting the lover, the lady of great estate, and the "tregatour," these last two original to Lydgate's A version. More surprisingly, Lansdowne 699 omits two urban figures, the bailiff and the burgess, with his lament "Howses rentes / tresoure & substauns // Dethe al fordothe [destroys] / suche is his nature" and recognition that his "gode" has all been "lente" him by the world.¹³¹ In their place, however, it turns the "man of law" into the more resonant figure of the "sergeant in lawe," perhaps a representative of the Inns of Court,¹³² and adds a justice or

judge, who is summoned “Sich dome to have [receive] / as ye have yoven [given] in soth,” responding with an acknowledgment that all justice is divine in origin very much in tune with the iconography of the Guildhall south porch: “Blissid ther-fore / is every wiht [person] // As bi holy scriptur / may ben averrid [affirmed] // That in all tyme / doth lawe & kepith riht.”¹³³ Lansdowne 699, Leiden 9, and Lincoln C.5.4 include a further legal figure: a doctor of civil and canon law, omitted in Corpus Christi 237 and Bodley 686. Lansdowne 699 also adds an artificer alongside the merchant, perhaps in order that the dance reflect London’s perennial division into two, fiercely competitive craft categories, and two idealized portraits of religious figures, a canon regular and a “woman sworn chaste” (a nun or vowess). At the same time, it renames the A version’s portrait of the secular canon “Sir dean or chanoun,” perhaps in a nod to the dean of St. Paul’s, Reginald Kentwood, who was in office when the *Daunce of Poulys* was installed, or his predecessor, More, who built the Pardon cloister.¹³⁴

Most strikingly, the B version includes two figures from London’s civic government. One is that frequent ceremonial visitor to the Pardon Churchyard, the mayor, included in all B version manuscripts, usually after the archbishop, the count, the bishop, and the knight and before the canon regular, the abbot, and the abbess. Lansdowne 699 presents the mayor in all his “wordly dygnyte,” his rapidly expanding wealth derived from mercantile “increce of good” and “olde wynnyng,” his zeal for “liberte,” and his sense of responsibility for civic order. As always, Death first summons the mayor, then receives his resigned response (the marginal rubric beside the first stanza identifying the figure whose turn it is to die, not the speaker):

~~My~~^{For}th sir Mayr / which had governaunce
 Bi pollicie / to rewle this cite
 Thoun your power / were notable in substaunce
 To flee my daunce / ye have no liberte
 Estate is noon / nor wordly dygnyte
 That may escape / out of my daungeris
 To fynde rescew / exauple ye may se
 Nouthir bi richesse / nor force of officeres.
 Wh~~er~~^{Responsum} I am now / th’estat in which I stood
 To rewle Cites / or Comouns to governe
 Plente of richesse / or increce of good
 Or olde wynnyng / that cometh to me so yerne [eagerly]
 Deth al defaceth / who so list to lerne
 Me for tareste [it vexes me] / he comyth on so faste
 Eche man ther-fore / shold a-fore discernen
 Prudently / to thynk upon his laste.¹³⁵

Despite his limited jurisdiction and powers, the mayor is here a figure of equal “estate” to his royal and courtly colleagues and their superior in wisdom, ruling city and “Comouns” with “gouvernaunce” and “pollicie,” not by craft or unnecessary force. This Whittington-like figure still takes spiritual responsibility for Londoners as he dies, pleading with them to practice prudence and discernment in words that recall the sententious account of the prudent man that opens the Whittington almshouse ordinances.

The other London civic figure is the “famulus,” evoked in verses that gesture toward bureaucrats like those at the Guildhall, perhaps specifically toward the common clerk himself:

~~Servant~~^{Famulus}. officer / in thyn office
 Yiff thou hast ben / as god wold & riht
 To pore & riche / doon pleyne Justice
 Fled extorcioun / with al thi myht
 Than maist thou / in this daunce go liht
 Or elles ful hevy / shalte thou be thanne
 Whanne alle domys [judgments] / shal fynaly be diht [given]
 Go we hens / the tyde abidith no man.
~~Shall~~^{Response} / to dethis daunce
 That wend / to have lyved yeeris many mo
 And sodeynly / forsake al my plesaunce
 Of offices / & profites that longe ther to
 Yit oon thyng / I consel or I go
 In office / lat no man doon outrage
 For dreede of god / & peyn also
 Also service / is noon heritage.¹³⁶

The servant figure here is a man of a certain power over “pore & riche,” and in a position both to be bribed (“extorcioun”) and to make legitimate “profites” from “offices,” a word used three times in the two stanzas. He has the same duty to do justice and same eternal prospect according to how he fulfils that duty as the judge. He is also a man who, always punctilious about time (“Go we hens / the tyde abidith no manne”), thought to live “yeeris many mo”—as a panel painting commissioned in the 1430s by a very much alive John Carpenter might protest. Still giving “consel” to those “in office” at the moment of leaving this life, speaking to the future about the right governance of the city as Carpenter does in the *Liber albus*, the dying public servant shows in his last words his continued concern for the London living.

In part, the poem and its panel paintings clearly function as corrective satire, both by describing idealized estate identities and by correcting deviations from proper behavior. Like the *Danse macabre*

itself, the B *Dance of Death* shares the preoccupations with temporal authority and the social anatomization and organization of characters in relation to the world of labor that Jill Mann isolates as typical of estates literature.¹³⁷ But whereas much of the *Danse macabre* is satirical (as is true of all the new portraits in Lydgate's A version), the B version tends to the idealizing and hortatory. Court figures can get short shrift, as do the cardinal, the archbishop, the abbot, and the abbess: "With your mantyl / furryed large & wide // Your veile your wympil / your ring of gret richesse."¹³⁸ But the B version notably moderates its account of both these last two figures, allowing the fat abbot and the overdressed abbess to speak sententiously as they die: "This pilgrimage / to every man is dewe // An ernest mateer / a mateer of no jape // Who that is alwey redy / shal nevyr rewe [regret] // The hour abydyng [the waiting hour] / that god hath for hym shape," says the abbess.¹³⁹ The laborer in B retains the plangent description of his life also found in the A version's translation of the French poem: "With spade & picoys [pickaxe] / laboured for my prouh [profit] // Dolvyn & dikid [dug and ditched] / & atte cart goon // For I may seyn / & pleyndly avow// In this world here / rest is ther noon."¹⁴⁰ But the harsh portrait of the "man of lawe" in the A version, called to an assize in which at last only truth can stand, is tempered with more compassionate advice to the sergeant at law in B. Where Death's speech in A ends with the generic, "He skapeth wyseli / of dethe the gret deluge // To-fore the dome / who is not teynted [tainted] with slouth,"¹⁴¹ B allows the possibility of mercy: "Be ware bi-tymes [in time] / & labour for mercy // For thei that trust most them silff [self] / ar sonnest bigiled."¹⁴² Even the artisan, an awkward figure from the viewpoint of London's merchant elite, dies with dignity: "Ther is no craft / serchid out nor souht // Cast [planned] nor compassid / bi old nor newe entaile [design] // I se ful weel / withynne myn owen thouht // A-geyns deth / whiche that may availle."¹⁴³

Two elements, both connected with the poem's emphasis on death, render the *Daunce of Poulys* a distinctive articulation of estates literature, suitable not only to the space of the Pardon Churchyard as the city understood that space but also to the concerns that preoccupied Carpenter and his Guildhall colleagues in exercising a civic mode of spiritual authority. One is directly connected with the shift from satire to exemplarity in the B version. Where their opposite numbers in the *Danse macabre* and Lydgate's A version are held up to shame and communal correction, many figures in the B version express solidarity with the living in the face of death and concern for the salvation of their colleagues, while making it clear that responsibility for reform lies with individuals. Some initially express

horror at Death's forceful invitation. Within a few lines, however, almost all have moved to prayerful acceptance, voicing proverbial memento mori wisdom about the need to live well, avoid sin, and have death daily in mind, as they take their own death's hand to join the dance. "God graunte me grace / of sich penaunce // As may myn old / synnes excuse // For alle be nat mery / that othir whyle daunce," exclaims the minstrel, in yet another revision of the A version.¹⁴⁴

Most elaborately, the woman sworn chaste provides her audience with a full spiritual program those who would make a good death should follow:

It helpeth man / to stryve a-geyn nature
Namely whan death / bi-gynneth t'assaile [to assail]
Wher-fore I counseil / every creature
To been redy a-geyn / this fel batayle
Vertu is sewrer / than othir plate or maile
Also no thyng / may helpe more at sich a need
Than to provide / a sur acquytaile [release]
With the hand of almesse / to love god & drede.¹⁴⁵

In exhorting "every creature" that the life of virtue accompanied by almsgiving in love and fear of God provides "sure acquytaile" for the spiritually debt-ridden London viewer, the woman sworn chaste aligns the religious stance of the *Daunce of Poulys* with projects such as the Whittington almshouse, and participates in the work's larger reformist portrayal of a mixed religious and lay society, joined in the Christian duty of mutual "counseil." In the *Daunce of Poulys*, a communal awareness of death recasts the mode of social satire, so often grounded in social competition in practice, as a mutual exhortation to be prepared for the universal end.

The other distinctive feature of the *Daunce of Poulys* considered as estates literature arises from the work's emphasis not on death itself but on the life Londoners must learn to live given the fact of death: one scrupulously balanced between engagement in the world of work and the penitential disengagement knowledge of the inevitability and suddenness of death engenders. As in the early Christian humanism of Petrarch's *De remediis*, and as in the Senecan or Stoic death practice from which it arises, this is the knowledge that allows members of each estate to live their tragic lives rationally, in negotiation with, not servitude to, fortune. The laity's immersion in the world is evoked in the specialized language used by Death in its exchanges with professions imaged as still busily engaged in their own affairs and not visibly prepared for death at all. "Com forth [mayster] / that loken up so ferre // With instrumentis / of Astronomye // To take the grees

[measure the angle] / & hithe [height] of every sterre,” orders Death, pulling the astrologer suddenly down to earth as the latter admits that neither “domofying [prediction] / nor calculacion” can help: astronomy is trumped by eschatology.¹⁴⁶ The need for detachment from the very career to which one is most attached is taught in scenes of this kind throughout the work, but given most clear expression, through contrast, by some of its professed religious. To Death’s “Yeve me your hand / with chekis ded & pale // Causid of watche / & long abstynence” the Carthusian responds that, unlike most, he does not fear death “bi naturall mocion,” since “Un-to this world / I was ded ago ful longe // Bi myn ordre / & my profession.”¹⁴⁷ “Whi shulde I grutche [complain] / or disobeye // The thyng to which / of verrey kyndly riht [true natural right] // Was I ordeyned / & born for to deye // As in this world / is ordeyned every wiht,” adds the regular canon, generalizing the ascetic sentiment of his colleague.¹⁴⁸ Only such figures, whose retreat from the world releases them from fortune’s wheel, understand their professions as salvific in themselves, a privilege denied even the secular clergy. Nonetheless, as must be the case in a civic model that needs each Londoner to remain satisfied with an allotted profession, the mortified life has the capacity to save almost all, not usually by sacralizing the profession but allowing its penitential performance, under death’s unwinking eye, to count as saving work.

However, the *Daunce of Poulys* serves not only as an outlet for an exemplary display of civic pietism—as an example of the extent to which, in the early fifteenth century, powerful laymen like Carpenter and secular institutions such as the city felt capable of claiming a measure of spiritual authority. From an institutional perspective, its primary concern as a civic artwork lies less in the religious duty of its creators to promote the eternal salvation of its viewers than in their professional duty to perpetuate the city that prominently displays it and of which it forms a specialized representation. As Death points out to the dying mayor, this is a city whose many sites of power and influence and relatively weak central administration require it to be governed “Bi pollicie,” not force.¹⁴⁹ According to the Christian political theory expounded in one of the books Carpenter owned, Christine de Pizan’s *Livre du corps de policie*, heterogeneity within political community is a necessity: “Just as the human body is not whole ... when it lacks any of its members, so the body politic cannot be perfect, whole, or healthy if all the estates of which we speak are not well joined.”¹⁵⁰ Since bodies need a head in order to impose a “ruling principle” on the “multitude” and prevent it “break[ing] up into its various parts,” as Aquinas puts it, this corporate metaphor most often undergirds a hierarchic theory of government—and the

Daunce of Poulys itself is far from denying hierarchy, tending rather to multiply representations of royal, ecclesiastical, and civic authority, as James Simpson has argued.¹⁵¹ Taken as a whole, however, the work's taxonomic rehearsal of estates and roles does not figure an hierarchic ideology but rather the kind that David Wallace, writing of Chaucer's *General Prologue*, has called "associational": respectful of the discrete, sometimes asymmetric identities of its members and seeking to influence their behavior through persuasion and example.¹⁵² In the *Daunce of Poulys*, each participant in the dance thus comes together temporarily to form, in a civil fashion, a community organized along horizontal or lateral lines. The estates on the wall dance not only with their deaths but with one another. In so doing, they provide an idealized figure at once of diversity and unity, under the limited rule of the Guildhall, particularly suitable as an imagination of the political cityscape of London by its governing bureaucrats.

The dance is often evoked, of course, as a representation of sociopolitical harmony and urban community in the premodern period. A century before the *Daunce of Poulys*, Ambrogio Lorenzetti used the image in his *Buon governo* frescoes in Siena, where a group of beautiful allegorical figures—their circular motion an allusion to the Neoplatonic understanding of dance as a reflection on earth of the eternal music of the spheres—dance the "tripudium" in front of the cityscape: "a solemnly festive dance" that symbolizes, in the words of Quentin Skinner, "the joy we naturally feel at the rule of justice and the resulting attainment of peace" in a prosperous city-state.¹⁵³ Despite its modern reputation as a sign of the grotesque, the *Daunce of Poulys* is equally a decorous dance, which emphasizes the first, formal moment of reverence—Death's proffered hand as he invites his mortal partner to join the dance with tags such as "Lat see your hand"¹⁵⁴—and alludes to the secular iconographic tradition of the dance as an image of social order.

Yet where the Neoplatonic model seeks to align the civic with the eternal, the *Daunce of Poulys*, a dance of corpses and the dying, is fundamentally concerned with time, using images of the human body in decay as a vivid expression of temporality and annihilation—of the truism that "undir hevene in erthe is no thyng stable."¹⁵⁵ In the *Buon governo* frescoes, the relation between earthly city and eternal city is general and abstract. Carpenter's civic wall paintings not only represent both the transience of individual human lives and the enduring nature of the London polity as a whole, they offer a set of hortatory directives to living Londoners whose secular aim is to secure the city's endurance through good government grounded, primarily, in self-government. The threat of anarchy that is posed by diversity in community is countered by the *ars moriendi* teaching of the *Daunce*.

Self-will is kept in check, not by a single authoritative figure, king, bishop, or mayor, but by demonstrating, while also urging, proper internalization of Christian law through mortification: a concept that includes a program of action such as the one the woman sworn chaste enjoins on viewers but that is also attitudinal. By learning that “Who livith a-ryght most nedis deye weel,”¹⁵⁶ the estate figures on the walls and their living viewers also learn to occupy their place in the community more properly, avoiding the perversions of their social roles through ambition, greed, and injustice, which are constructed as sins against God that would lead to a second, eternal death, and so doing their part to maintain the moral health, smooth running, and longevity of the city. As in the *memento mori* section of the *De remediis*, death becomes productive of secular virtue. Dying well secures the future of the city and all its generations.

Self-Care and Lay Asceticism

Learn to Die

Eremitism and the London Laity

So far, this study has mainly been concerned with the communitarian aspects of London death culture, as it reached out from the rites and practices associated with the deathbed to engage in an ambitious rethinking of the constructive social and civic purposes that might be served by the good deaths of members of all classes. Whether in the household or in the city, this rethinking naturally tends to confirm existing disparities of power and wealth rather than challenge them. The paterfamilias who uses the *Visitation of Sick* as part of his dutiful exercise of a “fadiris love to his meyne,” the dying merchant who leaves his amassed wealth to serve the needs of the poor, and the civic governor who commissions a representation of the city in which members of each estate dance with death are all, as a matter of course, seeking to further established interests. This is, indeed, what enables the city’s exceptionally elaborate death discourse to play the central role in civic and private culture it seems to have done during the early and mid-fifteenth-century decades when London’s autonomy and ambition were at their height.

Nevertheless, the ethos and language of household and civic death practice remains grounded in the collective deathbed language of Christian community. Even as they take on new, quasi-sacerdotal roles and the new burden of spiritual responsibility that comes with these roles, lay household and civic governors remain, on a theological level, the “even-cristen” of those over whom they exercise authority: members of the same collective. We saw in the Introduction that late medieval Aristotelian political theory often worked with an analogy between princely or civic rule and the rule “eche citeseyn” should exercise—according to John Trevisa’s translation of Giles of Rome’s *De regimine principum*, *The Governance of Kings and Princes*—over “his owne hous and maynye [household], not onlich for [because] suche

reulyng is his owne profit but also for suche reulyng is i-ordeyned to be comyn profit, as to [such as] þe profit of regne and of citee.”¹ As the *Daunce of Poulys* makes especially clear, the rhetoric of equality endemic to death discourse tempers, even while it reaffirms, this authoritarian model.

Medieval death discourse does understand the self and its government in relation to civic community, as we saw in [Chapter 2](#), in the moral exercises through which Petrarch’s *De remediis utriusque fortunae* helps rulers and governors maintain the rational self-discipline to do their jobs effectively, at the climax of which is a meditation on death. But the texts discussed here work as much to isolate individuals imaginatively from community as they do to affirm their solidarity with their “even-cristen.” Although, as I shall argue, they address the same class of privileged literate citizens and gentry who used *Visitation E* and participated in sustaining the communitarian civic understanding of death developed by Carpenter and others, these texts—their subject, death in relation to the ascetic concepts of tribulation and mortification—embody a counterdiscourse. Bringing to significant numbers of London lay readers (albeit not quite for the first time) a set of practices for self-government and self-care first developed in the context of eremitic monasticism, they understand the self as separated from a world essentially alien, even in its religious assumptions and practices.² No longer “even-cristen,” fellow members of the body of Christ, the civic community, in its intense concern for its material and political stability, becomes an embodiment of hostile fortune, a painful spiritual opportunity for readers to embrace tribulation. In a city we have seen intensely engaged in the pursuit of what Christian social theory calls the “active” life, with its combination of profitable daily labor, works of mercy, and preaching and teaching, these texts resistingly advocate a vision of elite lay life as oriented, individualistically, toward the contemplative.

[Chapter 2](#) was closely concerned with the relationship between a series of death texts and specific London institutions, all of them, from a religious point of view, organized around the active life of laypeople and secular priests: the Whittington almshouse and college of priests, both built around a parish church; the London Guildhall complex, with its library, chapel, and priests’ college; thanks to Carpenter’s initiative to reclaim the space for the city through art, even the cloisters at the Pardon Churchyard at St. Paul’s. Yet although this chapter also considers an institution that ministered to the laity, St. Bartholomew’s Hospital at Smithfield, the institution that most charismatically signified the mortified contemplative life to fifteenth-century lay Londoners was itself resistant to undue “worldly”

involvement with the active life of the laity, just as it was, in principle, to the communitarian emphasis of civic religion itself: the London Charterhouse.

Founded near Clerkenwell in 1371 but not properly finished until the 1420s, the London Charterhouse was one of the network of houses associated with late medieval Europe's best-respected religious order, the Carthusians, and as such was a modern instantiation of the most ancient and formally prestigious of religious professions, the eremitic. Carthusian practice was famously rigorous, maintaining the silence and solitude of the eremitic life by separating each of the brothers into his own cell, where for most of the day he prayed, worked, ate, and slept alone, deprived of the communality and informality provided for in corresponding spaces dedicated to the laity, such as the Whittington almshouse.³ Like their colleagues everywhere, the London Carthusians professed an understanding of individual self-government and self-shaping as these had been developed in an early eremitic literature, within which meditation on death, suffering, and the decay of the body are central. But they did so with a local inflection. The Charterhouse was built on the site of another of the city's several pardon churchyards, and replaced an earlier hermitage whose function was to pray for the souls of London's plague dead. Freely choosing their difficult but spiritually prestigious life of mortification and tribulation, the brothers meditated on death in a place of death and so helped to sanctify it.⁴

"The fear of the Lord is our cross," says John Cassian, one of the most influential of early monastic theorists, in the *Institutes*; "just as he who is fastened to the wood of the cross no longer considers things present ... and ... considers that he is dead to all earthly things, sending the thoughts of his heart on before to that place whither he doubts not that he is shortly to come, so we also when crucified by the fear of the Lord ought to be dead indeed to ... all earthly things."⁵ In an arrangement with parallels in several Continental Carthusian houses, verse exhortations to understand the contemplative life in this deliberately mortified way were written above each of the twenty-five alphabetized cells surrounding the great cloister at the London Charterhouse, each verse beginning with the proper identifying letter:

Ad regnum celi suspires mente fideli:
Non exalteris quamuis multis domineris,
Nec iam leteris, quia forsan cras morieris.

Bis duo sunt que mestificant me nocte dieque:
En moriar sed vbi vel quomodo nescio quando.⁶

[Sigh for the kingdom of heaven with a faithful mind:

do not exult even if you lord it over many,
Nor rejoice therefore, since perhaps you will die tomorrow.

Twice two things are there that fright me night and day:
Lo, I will die, but where and how and when I know not.]

Assigned cell M on briefly joining the house in the mid-fifteenth century (“*Mors iuvenes rapit atque senes nulli miseretur; / Ergo quisque bonum dum tempus adest operetur*” [Death takes young and old, has pity on none; / let everyone then do good while there is time]), the retired academic John Blackman finds himself in conversation with Death himself: “‘I knock.’ ‘Who is there?’ ‘I.’ ‘Who are you?’ ‘Death.’ ‘What do you want?’ ‘To enter.’ ‘Wait!’ ‘How long?’ ‘Until I have made myself ready.’ ‘I can wait, but I can’t leave. Hurry, then, pilgrim, while life remains!’” Not surprisingly, the book in which Blackman records verses and dialogue is full of *artes moriendi* copied by this humanist book collector to help him carry out Death’s injunction.⁷

Such exhortations to ascetic death preparation, repeated publicly by the painted Carthusian who dances with his death in the *Daunce of Poulys* (“Un-to this world / I was ded ago ful longe // Bi myn ordre / & my profession”), were powerfully felt by the devout lay Londoners who left the Charterhouse bequests in their wills, who pushed their way, uncanonically, into the great cloister to meet with the brothers and read these verses for themselves, or who made arrangements to be buried in the priory after their deaths. Stow’s *Survey of London* notes that in the house were monuments both to Sir Walter Manny and his wife, the lay founders, and to other distinguished, often gentry, laymen: “*Marmaduke Lumley, Laurence Brumley knight ... Dame Iahan Borough ... Katherine daughter to sir William Babington knight ... Iohn Peake Esquire, William Baron, and William Baron esquire ... Bartholomew Rede, knight, Maior of London, buried 1505,*” and many more.⁸ Altered to address the realities of the active life, these same exhortations also found echoes in the ascetic texts circulated by some of these same lay Londoners.

The Simple Treatise, a lay adaptation of parts of *Ancrene Wisse* written in the 1420s or 1430s by the rector of All Hallows the Great, William Litchfield, a friend of Carpenter, argues that even those who “have besines outward,” like “sherefes, maires ... baylees ... marchantes” or “men of craft,” should “in party be solitary,” like hermits, remembering the acronym COR, “*Camera ... Omnipotentis ... Regis ... þe chaumber of þe kyng almyghty,*” and exercising custody over their outer senses in protecting inner purity.⁹ “*In nidulo meo moriar Iob 29. I wil dy in my litel nest, seis holy Job, as if he had seid*

‘as long as I live to death cum shall, I live simply and suffer hard in my flesh that is without excuse that I keep clean and softness of conscience withinforth’.¹⁰ Instructing readers to speak seldom, to practice “sobrenes of etyng & drynkyng” and “sadness of mynd,” to imitate Christ’s tribulation by suffering “reproveable wordys, false wordys, & shameful wordys spoken against us,” and to dwell, when possible, in the imagined solitude of the inner self, “far from the passage of men,” *The Simple Treatise* is among a number of London works produced in the first half of the fifteenth century to set out lay versions of the ascetic life associated with the Carthusians and London’s other professional contemplatives.¹¹

The most important death text discussed in this chapter, the *Learn to Die* section of Henry Suso’s mid-fourteenth-century *Horologium sapientiae*, is of Dominican authorship but had strong Carthusian associations, especially in England.¹² Three London manuscripts of *Pety Job*, one of the other texts treated here, ascribe this long poem on suffering, death, and ill fortune—which allows readers to overhear and appropriate to their own situation the lament “whyche Job made in his tribulacion lying on the donghille”—to England’s most famous modern hermit, the “solempne, worthy, and discrete clerk Rychard Hampole,” a figure likewise associated through reception with the Carthusians.¹³ “Tribulation” and “mortification,” the ascetic keywords that link these texts with the others included in this discussion, *The Twelve Profits of Tribulation* and Thomas Hoccleve’s poetic *Series*, are also eremitic keywords, often used in Cassian’s *Institutes* and *Conferences*, even if we encounter them here in laicized forms. “If any pinge hadde be bettir ... than tribulacioun, God wolde have zeue it to his sone,” says the first speaker in *Six Masters on Tribulation*, a brief work found in several manuscripts of *Twelve Profits*; “but for he say wel þer was no pinge better than it, þefore he gaf it to him, and made him to suffre moost tribulacioun in þis wrecchid worlde, more than dide evere any man.”¹⁴ As the greatest, most Christ-like gift God can bestow, tribulation belongs to the highest form of spiritual life. To embrace tribulation is to turn from the imperfections of the world and the active life to the way of perfection. But in these texts, the way of perfection, organized largely around death preparation, belongs to the laity.

One reason that the extent to which devout members of the fifteenth-century London laity combined busy lives of power and material privilege with a spiritually ambitious mode of personal asceticism has not been widely recognized is because texts of tribulation and mortification with a London circulation have been categorized under the heading of “penitential theology”—categorized,

then forgotten, since religious fear has interested medievalists so much less than religious yearning and love.¹⁵ Yet in principle, ascetic discourse, as I describe it here, differs in crucial ways from penitential modes rooted in the sacramental practice of confession. Defined according to the most famous work on the topic by a London layman, Chaucer's "Parson's Tale," as the "pleynynge of man for the gilt that he hath doon," penitence is structured around a threefold process of contrition, confession, and satisfaction, which demands a close focus on the occasions and characteristics of the individual's particular sins.¹⁶ Since penitence was enjoined upon all, it was a key objective of late medieval catechesis to instruct every baptized Christian in the performance of this mode of moral self-analysis.

Ascetic discourse is also preoccupied with sin and repentance but only in general terms, as part of the existential condition of all human beings since the fall of Adam. In the ascetic texts I treat here, sin is a constant, woven into the fabric of every thought, word, and deed, including, in the case of *Pety Job*, the complaint to God that is the poem itself. Yet the condition of sin is only one tribulation, of many, that adds to the suffering endemic to the good Christian life, along with sickness, age, loss of goods, social conflict, persecution, and political failure—all the harsh life events associated with the malignancy of fortune and the final inevitability of death. Most important, unlike penitential texts that understand sin as a barrier to salvation, ascetic discourse understands the spiritual pain of sin, with other forms of suffering, as *productive*: as aids to sharpen one's perception of the relationship between divine and human and to encourage disengagement with the world.¹⁷ Suffering's most interesting role in this mode is not as punishment for sin but as a token of divine attention, a visitation of God. Patiently endured, tribulation becomes mortification: for laymen, as for Carthusians, a sign of spiritual perfection.

The founding text of Western asceticism, Athanasius's mid-fourth-century *Life of St. Anthony*, describes Anthony's conversion as prompted by hearing in church the passage from the Gospel "in which the Lord says to the rich man: If thou wilt be perfect, go sell all that thou hast [*vade, vende omnia*], and give it to the poor; and come, follow me and thou shalt have treasure in Heaven" (Matthew 19:21).¹⁸ Tribulation texts written for the laity translate and generalize the ascetic message of this passage, allowing those who live in the world the means for an affective and intellectual withdrawal that does not require Anthony's literal obedience to the injunction "*vade, vende omnia*" and the living martyrdom to which this obedience led. For substantial London laypeople unable or unwilling to follow the example of the once wealthy Anthony or his Carthusian descendants,

tribulation texts provide a means to cultivate inner asceticism: a private conversion and spiritual withdrawal from everyday life, fueled by reimagining daily vicissitudes in eremitic terms. As in Petrarch's *De remediis utriusque fortunae*, because of the anxieties, temptations to sin, and other troubles it brings in its wake, even good fortune, reimagined as spiritual trial, can become grist to the lay ascetic mill, new cause for meditation on one's end. Indeed, a continuing command over material riches can offer almost as good a basis for mortification as its renunciation, providing the same, rare resources available to members of wealthy Carthusian houses—silence, solitude, freedom from worry over material necessities—while also requiring a focus on inner self-separation from the world made only more demanding by the absence of the institutional props available in the Charterhouse. To a far greater extent than practices such as passion meditation, which promotes imaginative engagement with sacred history as it points to the transcendent, ascetic practice is about reorienting the structure of one's engagement with the present, shaping one's inner life, in imitation of Anthony, into the “ideal pattern of the ascetic life.”¹⁹

The life of the wealthy lay ascetic remains, nonetheless, sufficiently paradoxical that this reorientation requires constant discursive effort. Together, the tribulation works discussed in this chapter, *Pety Job* and *Twelve Profits of Tribulation*, hence work to instill in readers the “willingness to suffer, the firm ‘yes’ to one's own experience of weakness”²⁰ that arises from achieving an inward understanding of humanity as sensual and mortal, subject to God and worldly mutability. Unlike that of his biblical ancestor, the tribulation faced by the lyric Job of *Pety Job*, the textual subject of the second section, does not come from the external world, but consists of an urgent knowledge of the self as human, naturally corrupt, a fragile, weak, finite being whose sinful nature is essential to bone and body. Readers of *Pety Job* are encouraged to contemplate their own inherent mortality and the universal suffering associated with old age, sickness, and eventual death, when “I shal be but wormes ware [ooze for worms] / ... when my body ys all bare, / And on a bere brought shal be.”²¹ More concerned than *Pety Job* with the many external forms of tribulation, the *Twelve Profits*, discussed at the beginning of the third section, seeks to inculcate the cardinal virtue of fortitude in its readers by encouraging the patient endurance of various fortunes, both bad and good, including the captivation of the soul by sensuality, wealth, and the pleasures of temporal power. Both texts thus speak directly to the readership for whom they seem initially to have been produced: members of the privileged laity who used imaginative self-mortification to fashion a distinctively fractured mode of subjectivity at odds with their familial and civic commitments and tendency to

understand themselves through those commitments.

The names of several readers of this kind are found in the London books that form a backdrop to this and the next chapter, and in which *Twelve Profits* and other works circulated. Here, however, I focus on a single reader and his book: William Baron, first owner of what may be the earliest of these manuscripts, Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Douce 322, whose name we have already seen included by Stow among the gentry dead buried and memorialized at the London Charterhouse, and who makes an excellent point of reference for this study of how ascetic texts intersected with the aspirations of the class of London readers he represents. Along with more than twenty other works, short and long—including *Pety Job*, *Twelve Profits*, and the subject of the next chapter, *The Book of the Craft of Dying*—Douce 322 also contains one of a number of copies of the *Learn to Die* section of the Carthusian translation of Suso's *Horologium sapientiae*, the *Seven Points of True Love and Everlasting Wisdom*. *Learn to Die* is one of several death texts paired with works on tribulation in fifteenth-century books produced for the laity. After its brief account of *Twelve Profits*, the third section of this chapter thus turns to consider how readers like Baron might use death meditation to construct a backdrop against which the intensified ascetic subjectivity imaged in tribulation texts was to emerge.

Through contemplation of mortality and adversity, death meditation as Suso depicts it aims to induce conversion from false worldly comforts toward an ascetic mode of self-knowledge. Imagination of the death of self or other allows laypeople to approximate privately the publicly mortified identity of the *Daunse of Poulys* Carthusian, “dede longe agon” “[u]n to the worlde” by “ordre” and “professioun.” Even more than *Pety Job*, *Learn to Die* shows what we might not guess, that ascetic self-knowledge, in the mode in which it is offered to lay Londoners, is *pleasurable*. With its wide dramatic and emotional range, shifting subject positions, and ingratiating cultivation of the reader's spiritual self-worth, Suso's brilliant private entertainment allows us to understand this process as the aesthetically crafted experience it is.

One fifteenth-century Londoner who was exceptionally quick to see the literary potential both of tribulation material and death texts in general and of Suso's death text in particular was the poet, scribe, and civil servant Thomas Hoccleve. Hoccleve included a verse version of *Learn to Die* as the poetic climax of his last long sequence, the *Series* (c. 1420), and in the final section of the chapter, I consider parts of this sequence, *The Complainte*, *The Dialogue*, and *Lerne to Dye*, as ascetic discourse. As well as being the author of secular courtly works such as *L'Epistre de Cupide* and *The Regement of Princes*, Hoccleve was a

religious writer who had connections with many prominent Londoners, including John Carpenter. Besides religious court poems such as *The Complaint of the Virgin*, written for Henry V's aunt, Joan Fitzalan, Countess of Hereford, and the anti-Lollard *To Sir John Oldcastle*, whose implied reader is Henry himself, he wrote a poem to the Virgin for Thomas Marleburgh, a London stationer, and a devout ballade for Robert Chichele, master of the Grocers' Company, twice mayor of London (1411, 1421), and brother of the archbishop of Canterbury Henry Chichele.²²

The *Series* is often read as Hoccleve's attempt to be reaccepted into the London literary and political community from which *The Compleinte* suggests he had been exiled for a period by a combination of mental illness, misfortune, and lack of poetic success. I suggest, rather, that the poetic sequence sketches a program of interior asceticism, self-examination, and conversion that rests on a *continuation* of his break with society and withdrawal from the political world. The discourse of ascetic withdrawal that shapes the *Compleinte* and *Lerne to Dye* signals Hoccleve's self-presentation as a convert, with a heightened experience of interiority and a clear sense of himself as member of a spiritual elite. In so doing, the *Series* figures the same construction of ascetic identity through the contemplation of adversity and death tersely represented in the London Charterhouse door verses and widely dispersed in fifteenth-century vernacular London books. The speaker laments, near the end of *Pety Job*,

Who shall graunt me, or [before] I be dede?
To wryte hem [i.e., my sufferings] by oon and oone,
My booke with ynke blak or rede,
Made with gumme and vermylone?

....

That all men, whereever they yede,
Myght otherwhyle loke theropon?²³

Hoccleve's great sequence of ascetic poetry, its theme the mortified and fractured self that arises from tribulation, its centerpiece a long, brilliant meditation on death, takes up this challenge.

The Mortification of William Baron: *Pety Job*

William Baron, my representative lay ascetic, seems to have been a member of an Essex gentry family²⁴ who moved to London, possibly in the early 1420s, and became one of four tellers for the Exchequer, the core of the royal financial system at Westminster: a lucrative position

for which he was awarded a life grant as early as 1445 and was still holding in 1469.²⁵ Not many years after 1435, presumably already some time into his life as a Londoner, he married Joan Knolles or Shelley, a widow, with whom he had only a single child we know about, Jane, who married Sir Walter Wrottesley around 1456, with whom she had nine children before 1473.²⁶ By the 1450s, William and Joan lived in a large tenement, with garden, in the “paradys” or quadrangle at St. Bartholomew’s Hospital, renting it along with a shop or stable in nearby Smithfield.²⁷ During the 1460s, Baron’s name is mentioned several times as a recipient of a pardon and gifts of moneys from Edward IV in return for special services, perhaps including loans to the Crown.²⁸

In 1445, Baron and his wife inherited property in London from Baron’s father-in-law, the grocer Thomas Knolles (brother of Margaret Chichele, wife of Hoccleve’s patron Robert Chichele), in return for settling the debts of Joan’s dead first husband on behalf of a son from this marriage, Thomas Shelley, still a minor.²⁹ Knolles was one of many children of a more famous Thomas Knolles who had died ten years earlier: a prominent Lancastrian who, besides serving in 1414 on the commission to investigate the Oldcastle rebellion, was twice mayor (1399 and 1410) and one of the wealthiest property owners in the city. Like Richard Whittington, the older Knolles, who in the 1390s bought an estate in North Mimms near St. Albans, was a major civic benefactor, building waterways to bring water to Newgate and Ludgate Prisons, helping with the Guildhall renovations in 1410, rebuilding his parish church, St. Anthony’s, Budge Row—where he and his son Thomas were buried, with their wives, Joan and Isabelle—and founding an almshouse in 1431 to serve the needy of the Grocers’ Company.³⁰ The epitaph to the younger Thomas at St. Anthony’s gives a sense of the parish piety of this prosperous London family:

His Fader and he to this Chyrch
Many good dedys they did wyrch.
Example by him ye may see
That this world is but vanitie;
For wheder he be smal or gret,
All salle turn to wormys mete

.... ..

Wee may not prey, hertely pray ye
For owr Soulys, Pater Noster and Ave,
The sooner of owr payne lesside to be,
Grant us the holy Trinite. Amen.³¹

Although Baron appears not to have been a guildsman, and had or

developed a piety of a different order (as I will argue), he was thus directly connected, through the family into which he married, with a number of the powerful Londoners discussed in [Chapter 2](#). While we do not have his will, he also seems to have lived at least into his seventies. Probably born within a few years of 1410, he was still alive until within a few years of 1480.³² A flyleaf added to the front of Douce 322, with a table of the book's contents, records the gift of this book from Baron to his granddaughter (the word used is "nece") Parnel Wrattisley, a nun at the Dominican house at Dartford. As Jane's fifth child, born between c. 1463 and c. 1470 and still alive in 1512, Parnel cannot have taken her final vows before the mid-1470s and probably did so some years later.³³

St. Bartholomew's Hospital, near whose chapel Baron and his wife had property, was the most venerable institution of its kind in London, founded in 1123 by the lowborn layman Rahere, in obedience to a vision of the apostle, who commissioned this great work of penitential piety, "yn the Subbarbis of Londone, at Smythfeld."³⁴ The hospital, its church, and its chapel—where the Baron and Knolles arms were on display, suggesting that husband and wife worshipped there³⁵—as well as the nearby Priory of St. Bartholomew, were run by Augustinian canons, but the hospital's master and chaplains were attended by clerks, as well as lay brothers and sisters. The hospital housed the sick, elderly, and orphaned of London and environs, brought there to benefit from the apostolic promise made in Rahere's vision: "This spirituall howse, almyghty God, shalle ynhabite and halowe yt and glorifie yt ... Treweley, every soule convertid penytent of his synne and in this place prayng yn hevyn graciously schall be herde. The seekere with perfite herte for whatsumevyr tribulacioun, with owte dowte he schalle fynde helpe."³⁶

While the institution primarily cared for its inhabitants' spiritual welfare, as well as providing food, shelter, and clothing on a short- or long-term basis, its interest in combining spiritual with medical care is attested by the works of John Mirfield (d. 1407), a hospital chaplain, written while he was living at St Bartholomew's as a pensioner. These are *Breviarium Bartholomei*, a compilation of medical and pharmaceutical advice, and *Florarium Bartholomei*, an alphabetized book of patristic and other apothegms on religious topics.³⁷

During the fifteenth century, the hospital's reputation for charity and civic goods was at its height. In 1464, the hospital's brethren and their long-lived and impressively competent master, John Wakeryng, were even pardoned by the king for accepting property bequests without royal license, "in consideration of the works done within the hospital in the relief of poor pilgrims, soldiers, sailors and others of all nations."³⁸ This sign of royal appreciation may have been connected to

the fact that, by this time, the hospital's lands were rented to a number of powerful Londoners, including especially urban gentry and civic and royal officers. The hospital's cartulary and rental record, copied in part by the well-known scribe John Cok, a hospital brother, name figures such as the book entrepreneur John Shirley; Henry VI's nurse, Joan Asteley; William Cleve, clerk of the King's Works; and other "men and women" with "wide literary and pious tastes."³⁹ Baron himself appears several times in Cok's Cartulary as feoffee or guarantor in transfers involving hospital-owned lands, as well as for working alongside the energetic Wakeryng in rebuilding and subleasing properties built in the precinct and the hospital wall itself.⁴⁰

Because of St. Bartholomew's status as an ancient charitable foundation, known in latter times for its Latin school and chapels as well as for "the warmth and scope of its hospitality,"⁴¹ the area immediately around it had an obvious attraction for spiritually ambitious members of London lay elites, especially elderly gentry or former royal officers who had no association with one of the craft guilds or deep, familial relationship with a city parish.⁴² As one of the city's "liberties," an area within which civic residency rules and other ordinances did not apply, it was also the scene of the perhaps less edifying pleasures of the famous St. Bartholomew's merchant fair, held by the priory just outside the hospital walls, whose tournaments, cloth and cattle fairs, musical performances, and wrestling matches brought wealth and glamour, as well as all levels of city and court society, to Smithfield for three days every August.⁴³ Living on hospital grounds, the prosperous and socially established thus grew old beside the spiritually beneficial sufferings of the hospital inmates while retaining privileged access to the political power enacted in the tournaments and conspicuous consumption of the fair. Baron's own life, spent in counting and weighing gold and silver and making tallies of payments to the royal treasury, but also in devout reading of a notably sophisticated kind, may make him a characteristic elite inhabitant of this area of the city.

Besides Douce 322, Baron owned Oxford, St. John's College MS 208, a psalter or prayer book, which has his coat of arms on an early folio; and a book, now part of Oxford, Bodleian Library MS 596, that contains a London chronicle, a list of London mayors, sheriffs, and bailiffs updated to the 1470s, various materials connected with Westminster, and the verse "Complaint of God" and "Parce michi domine" (this last an ascetic *chanson d'aventure*, also called "The Bird of Four Feathers").⁴⁴ Ralph Hanna suggests he may also have owned a second book now bound into Bodley 596, containing Lydgate's *Life of Our Lady*.⁴⁵ Douce itself may initially have been three separate books

or booklets, the first two being bound into the beginning of the book proper before Baron, presumably near the end of his long life, gave it to his granddaughter. These two eight-leaf verse booklets are built, in one case, around Lydgate's rhyme royal *Kalendar*, a devotional guide to the liturgical year, and in the other around *Pety Job*, with its ascription to Richard Rolle, followed by another copy of "The Bird of Four Feathers" and a confession formulary that itemizes, with their branches, the seven deadly sins.⁴⁶

The main part of Douce, now eighty folios but once longer, contains a variety of religious reading, including, in its second half, several works on the devout lay life in general. These are: *A Treatise of Ghostly Battle*, an elaboration of the armor of God topos from Ephesians 6; *The Ladder of Foure Ronges*, an explicitly lay adaptation of Guigo II's *Scala claustralium* (an important Carthusian account of reading, meditation, prayer, and contemplation); *The Twelve Profits of Tribulation*, also written for lay readers; Middle English version 1 of Rolle's *Emendatio vitae*, a work that redescribes the eremitic life to render it accessible to those living in the world;⁴⁷ and single chapters of the lay manuals *Fervor amoris* and *Pore Caitif*.⁴⁸ The book may once have ended with other brief texts, including *The Counsels of Isidore*, on self-knowledge, and the confessional formulary *St. Brendan's Confession*, yet again written with lay readers in mind.⁴⁹ With only brief exceptions, including this last, the works in this half of Douce are distinctive for their articulation of an eremitic identity, available to the laity, which allows them to engage in the struggle with evil (*Treatise of Ghostly Battle*), embrace spiritual poverty (*Emendatio vitae*), understand all forms of suffering as meritorious spiritual trial (*Twelve Profits*), and assume the role of God's "chosyn disciples," standing against the "wyse men of the worlde" (*Ladder of Foure Ronges*).⁵⁰

The most coherent group of works in the main part of Douce, however, are the death texts that form its first half, to which Baron specifically points in the note gifting the completed book to his granddaughter at Dartford, in the flyleaf affixed to its first booklet: "These books, in whome is contente [contained] dyvers devowte tretis, & specyally the tretis þat is callid ars moriendi, ys of þe gifte of Wylliam Baron esquier to remayne for evyr to þe place and nonrye of detforde and specially to the use of dame pernelle wrattisley, sister of þe same place by licence of her abbas, þe which pernelle is nece to þe for seyde gentylman William Baron" (f. 1v).⁵¹ "Ars moriendi" itself is no doubt *The Book of the Craft of Dying*, the last and longest text in the group. But this work is preceded by four others that could also almost answer to this name: the mnemonic death preparation text *Sex obseruanda omni Christiano in extremis* (Every Christian should take note of six things in dying), with its injunctions to "Sorow þu and

desyre to sorowe / And sorowe thow for thow sorowes nat dewly”;⁵² the brief “Death’s Warning to the World,” an adaptation of four stanzas of Lydgate’s *Fall of Princes*;⁵³ Suso’s meditative dialogue *Learn to Die*, discussed in detail in the next section; and a second, somewhat similar meditation on death, *Tower of All Towers* from Laurent d’Orléans’s late thirteenth-century *Somme le roi*.

Apart from *Sex obseruanda omni Christiano*, which assumes a lay reader, all these death texts address an audience that could be lay, secular, or religious. Taken as a whole, however, Douce’s combination of death texts with eremitic works that seek to separate readers from worldly community makes best sense as the expression of a form of perfectionist lay religiosity, perhaps partly Carthusian in inspiration, whose focus is on the ascetic experience of tribulation and which inculcates practices of interiorization and self-mortification designed for the perfected few. Despite its eventual destination at Dartford, the main contents of Douce are, at root, concerned with the cultivation of an understanding and experience of spiritual suffering of a distinctively worldly—but at the same time overtly spiritually elite—kind. As is true of the long group of laicized eremitic texts near the end of the book, the beneficiaries of these practices are a group of laymen whose reading material works to distinguish them carefully from the general Christian community.

In the completed Douce as gifted to Parnel, the theme of self-separation from the world through spiritual suffering is first announced by *Pety Job*: a work of uncertain provenance and date, although it survives in three London copies and is likely a metropolitan poem.⁵⁴ Like the biblical book of Job from which it derives, the poem, just under seven hundred lines in length, is a rumination on the mutability of the world and of the body: a topic also explored in Petrarch’s Christian Stoic *De remediis*, although here the question of the vagaries of fortune is located in a larger exploration of providence and human sin. According to the most influential medieval Christian discussion of Job, Gregory’s *Moralia in Job*, the biblical book as a whole reflects on “the fallen condition of our mortal state of being, so chequered with adversity and prosperity” in the miserable light of “the unalterable state” humankind “might have kept in Paradise” had Adam not turned from the stability of God, but also illustrates the redemptive power of the sufferings it describes, insofar as Job prefigures Christ’s sacrificial suffering, as participated in by all Christians.⁵⁵ Job’s outcry against his situation is, for Gregory, a salutary lamentation for sin and the spiritual troubles associated with the flesh, a passionate response to tribulation very different from the Senecan Stoic *apatheia* recommended by Petrarch.⁵⁶

Pety Job can be read in much these Gregorian terms. However, although the poem works closely with the passages of the biblical book it uses, its direct ancestor is liturgical, consisting of the nine lessons from Job included in the office of the dead: an office integral to monastic devotion sung in modified form at lay funeral services and a core item of late medieval vernacular and Latin primers, books of hours, and psalters. Lay readers like Baron, the first item in whose personal psalter (the St. John's manuscript) is, indeed, the office of the dead, might in principle have used *Pety Job* paraliturgically, as a supplement to private recitation of the Latin service at home, or in attending the office in the chapel at St. Bartholomew's, and would in any case have identified the poem closely with funerals and other rites for the dead. In Douce and two other manuscripts, each stanza of the poem is headed by the Latin verse from the office that it paraphrases, apparently encouraging such a reading practice.⁵⁷

Yet readers of the poem might also have felt a certain distance from the liturgy. The nine lessons of the office, divided into the three nocturns of matins (dirige)—the second of the office's three hours, with vespers (placebo) and lauds—consist of extracts from Job's speeches, without framing narrative, recontextualizing his laments for his ephemeral, sinful nature among the groups of psalms and antiphons on divine tribulation, mercy, and protection that begin each nocturn and the responsories with which each nocturn ends.⁵⁸ For example, the final nocturn—which turns from the triumph of Job 19 ("For I know that my Redeemer liveth; and in the last day I shall rise out of the earth. And I shall be clothed again with my skin, and in my flesh I shall see my God") back to the fear and confusion of chapter 10 ("A land of misery and darkness, where the shadow of death and no order, but everlasting horror dwelleth")—is followed by a versicle that reaffirms the coming resurrection. In a widely circulated vernacular version of the office of the dead, this reads: "God, makere-of-nouȝt of alle creaturis, þat formedist me of þe erpe, and wondurliche wiþ þin owne blood has bouȝt us, þouȝ my bodi rotte now, þou schalt make it rise out of þe sepulcre in þe dai of doom. heere þou me! here þou me! þat þou comaunde my soule to be put in þe bosum of abraham, þe patriark."⁵⁹ Through its supporting scriptural material, the office of the dead thus shapes the lamentations of Job into a celebration of the consoling narrative of Christian redemption, appropriate for use at the graveside, daily devotions, and the votive offices commemorating the dead.⁶⁰ Although it strictly follows the order of the lessons, *Pety Job* omits this comforting liturgical surround, restoring, and in some respects even surpassing, the bleakness of the biblical book. It thus replicates the modalities of other ascetic texts, monastic and lay, by refusing to give any resolution to its account of the existential

problematic on which it muses, since the poem is written not in relation to the literally dying but for those who wish to mortify themselves in this life.

The biblical Job has undergone terrible reversals, his family dead, his wealth decimated, his fall from fortune unprecedented, his self-understanding as one of God's favored shattered. By contrast, the sufferings of the narrator of *Pety Job* are not explicitly caused by external events but are presented as integral to the condition of createdness. It is only the self-awareness of the narrator's focus on this condition, and *Pety Job*'s attention to recreating this focus in readers, that renders the thoughts and feelings the poem registers unusual. Following the lessons verse by verse, amplifying each into part or all of a twelve-line stanza structured around an intricate three-rhyme pattern, the poem further integrates the fierce focus on life's sufferings of its biblical source by presenting the whole exposition as a vernacular gloss on the refrain that ends each stanza, *Parce michi Domine* (spare me Lord), the first words of the first lesson (Job 7:16). This refrain in turn unifies the *c* rhymes of the poem's fifty-seven stanzas, each of which ends by opening out into the [ē] of *Domine*, often rhymed with (pre-vowel-shifted) *me*.⁶¹

This tight formal-sonic structure makes the problematic of time and human embodiment that is the poem's subject—how “That day a man ys fresshe and fryke [energetic], / And sheweth forth a gladsom chere; / But tomorow he wexeth syke, / And haply [perhaps] borne forthe on a bere”⁶²—feel as inescapable as it in fact is. Underlying and informing the nagging awareness of mortality central to this problematic throughout the poem is the relation between the creator and a sinful, mortal creature, subject to and dependent on a being of unfathomable alterity:

Whether Thyne eyen fleshly be,
Or yef Thow seest as seeth a man?
Nay, forsoth, but oonly we [we only]
Of outward thynges beholdyng han;
But inward thynges dost Thow se,
That non other may se ne can.⁶³

Allowing no surcease to complaint, lamentation, and plea, the *Parce michi Domine* refrain makes the infinity of this gap between creator and created the precondition of the poem's own being, and a condition no future it is able to anticipate can resolve. The poem ends, not looking toward the transcendent with the office, but begging to be rescued from the end of the mortal body, from the

[D]erke lande that I never se,

That kevered ys with black alway....
The londe of woo and of wrechednesse,
Where ben mo peynes than tonge may telle,
The londe of dethe and of duresse,
In whyche noon order may dwelle,
The londe of wepyng and of drerynesse. [cf Job 10]⁶⁴

Only death and hell, not the joys of heaven, are truly visible from within the prison of the poem, and of life.

Trapped in a frail, sensual, and sinful physical form, the lyric Job is a “leefe, that lyght ys to blowe,” “freel of kynde,” mimicking the world’s instability with his own bodily movements, as he “renne[s] forthe fro rowe to rowe, / Somtyme before, somtyme behynde,”⁶⁵ his mind similarly “stumble[ing]” in its constant movement, as it seeks in vain for constancy and peace:

My thoughtes wandre wyde whare [wherever],
For they ben, Lorde, full variaunte.
Myne herte they grevyn wonder sare,
For ever about hym [i.e., my heart] they haunte;
Thys maketh me to drowpe and dare [cower],
That I am lyke a pore penaunte [penitent].⁶⁶

“*Lyke a pore penaunte*” but not one. The discussion of sin by the *Pety Job* poet is framed in existential, not penitential terms,⁶⁷ complaining of sin, not confessing to it, amplifying the urgent questions asked by the Book of Job about a just God who creates humans so porous: their blood “nessher [softer] than ys sylke,” a fabric whose pliability makes the speaker “do dedys swylke [such deeds] / With whyche my goste ys ofte unglade,” wading so deep “That nygh I droune thorow freelté.”⁶⁸

Rather than being related to contrition or the sacrament of penance, repentance is tied to the desire for *time* and the frustratingly finite nature of life. The lyric Job’s elaboration of Job 14:5, “Thou has appointed his bounds which cannot be passed,” describes the extra fifteen years God gave Ezekiel to weep for the sins inherent in human living and asks for the grace of this time for himself:

Therefore, Lord, suffer Thow me
A lytell whyle that wepe I may
The tyme that ever I greved The
In ded or thought, by nyght or day,
And graunt me, yet Thy wyl be,
That here in erthe wepe I may.⁶⁹

Yet in this world of tribulation, time entails only the prolongation

of suffering, as “variant” thoughts make him “wake all nyght” in anxious vigil:

The nyght they turned into the day,
For they maden me to wake all nyght;
I myght nat slepe by no way,
Suche thoughtes were in myn hert plyght.
In derkenesse dymme as I so lay,
Yet hoped I after the clere daylyght;
But thoughtys me so trobled ay,
That I was than a wofull wyght [person].⁷⁰

Job appears here in his role as patron saint of melancholy, his troubled thoughts a “grete disese” that keeps him between sleep and waking, a liminal state in a bed that prefigures the grave: ⁷¹

In derkenesse dymme, all oute of ese,
My lytell bed spred I have:
That bed shall I never lese,
Though I wolde for angor rave,
Tyll the Day of Dome that, of my grave,
I shall aryse, and mo [others] with me.⁷²

Indeed, although this bed can appear in a positive light—“Wythyn the close of cheryté, / Good God, Thow me recluse,” Job prays⁷³—the life of suffering the poem describes can seem hard to distinguish from the death of the body it hopes to defer and the death of the soul it seeks to avoid.

The poem’s intense meditation on mortality comes to a climax in its treatment of lesson eight, which begins with an expansion of the proleptic imagining of the dessicated body in Job 19:20–23, the “skyn” of the “mouth” “cleved fast,” lipless and “wasted” by sickness or age. Touched by the “hande of God,” the lyric Job at last calls on his “frendes” to support him with their penitential praxis and prayers, especially the office of the dead itself: “Now helpe, yef that youre wyll be, / With prayer, fastyng, and almesdede. / For these mowen best gete me mede / With *Placebo* and *Dirige*.”⁷⁴ Trust in these treacherous “frendes,” however, proves short-lived:

Yow I chese for frendes trewe,
And made yow myne executoures.
But tyme shall come that ye shall rewe
That ever ye were to me so false treytoures.
My good ys spent, as hit [as if it] were youre,
But nat a peny yevyn [*give*] ye me.

Nowe for all suche faytours [imposters],
Lorde, *Parce michi, Domine*.⁷⁵

For all his participation in a community in which help for “even-cristen” is a solemn spiritual responsibility, the lyric Job finds himself persecuted by false and spendthrift “executours”: a word that especially points up the orientation of this text toward lay readers, concerned that those they choose to organize their spiritual provisions after death—the Masses or the poor who will speed the souls with “prayer, fastyng, and almesdede”—be true friends, not “false treytours.” Rather than relying on such friends, *Pety Job* implicitly urges, such readers should rely on the virtue inherent in their ascetic inner lives of isolated suffering, and the vision of God to which, in hope and trust, if not yet in sight, it leads: “Thys hope ys in myn hert sette, / That never from me shall dyssevere. / Thereyn my truste also ys knette [knitted], / The whyche to have now ys me lever.”⁷⁶

The conviction that ascetic suffering is, in the end, productive expressed in this passage and taken up in other tribulation texts found in Douce undergirds both the poem as a whole and the meditative practice that it enacts and urges. Outside this brief expansion of Job 19:27, however, few signs of hope enter *Pety Job*. What saves the lyric Job and his reader from despair, rather, is their joint understanding that the intense awareness of suffering and helplessness the poem inculcates is a sign of privilege, worthy of remembrance in the form of a written text that can render the sufferings of one individual an “ensaumple of everychone”:

Who shall graunt me, or [before] I be dede,
To wryte hem by oon and oone,
My [i.e., in my] booke with ynke blak or rede,
Made with gumme and vermylone?
Or ellys yet in plate of lede,
Or graven in harde flynte of stone,
That all men, whereever they yede [journeyed],
Myght otherwhyle [sometimes] loke theropon?
I wolde my frendys and my foon [foes]
Ensaumple take myght by me.
As Thow art Thre, and God al Oon,
Now *Parce michi, Domine*.⁷⁷

In a rhetorical move that partly parallels the more materially productive uses of bodily death described in [Chapter 2](#), what Geoffrey Harpham calls the “conversional power” of ascetic practice “to inspire others to similar performances”⁷⁸ transforms a static and recursive lament on the fragmented nature of human nature into a tool of

spiritual education. Through the words of the poem and the changed lives of its readers as they face their own mortality, others learn the conception of the self as “clot of clay / That breketh ofte thorough brotylnesse” that is the ground of ascetic consciousness: a first step in realizing the “flesshe, the worlde, they ben my fone! / ... Ever aboute to perysshe [destroy] me!”⁷⁹ Even as the ascetic understands himself as ignored or repudiated by his community, he reaches out, by word and example, to the rare individuals willing to hear.

Tribulation and Death Meditation: *Twelve Profits* and *Learn to Die*

Baron and other readers of Douce thus read its core *ars moriendi* texts in light of a poem whose speaker is fiercely resistant both to death itself and to any suggestion that death and the tribulation that precedes it can be mastered. But readers also had access to a second account of tribulation, *The Twelve Profits of Tribulation*. This work is as invested as *Pety Job* in the continuity of suffering that constitutes ascetic living. Unlike *Pety Job*, however, it analyzes the suffering it registers, teaching readers “wherof tribulacions serven [what is the purpose of tribulations], and not only þat þou schalt suffre hem patiently, but gladlye, and comferte the inwardly of þat þou arte discomferte outwarde.”⁸⁰ Promising comfort where *Pety Job* merely repeats “*Parce michi*,” *Twelve Profits* theorizes the spiritual logic both of the poem and of the form of death discourse that pertains to this ascetic lay milieu.

The later of two English translations of the thirteenth-century *De duodecim utilitatibus tribulationibus*—itself a redaction of a work with its own vernacular life in French and English, the *Tractatus de tribulatione*—*Twelve Profits* survives in six fifteenth-century copies, all of them directly associated with London and Londoners.⁸¹ As with so many other works of this type, the text begins by signaling its roots in the ethical and ascetic practice of late Stoicism, in which bad and good fortune are understood as aids in the cultivation of detachment and independence from the external world: “For Seneca seith: *Non est ita magna consolacio sicut illa que ex desolacione extrahitur*. There is none so gret comfort as is þat þat is drawn oute of discomferte.”⁸² Yet this particular pseudo-Senecan apothegm evokes a distinctively monastic form of Stoicism. As Michel Foucault argues, unlike their Stoic sources, monastic ascetic practices intended to disrupt the hold of the external world are aimed less at “the establishing of sovereign mastery of oneself by oneself” than at inculcating a form of “humility

and mortification.” Reaching beyond “detachment with respect to oneself,” these practices tend toward an actual “destruction of the form of the self.”⁸³ Stoic self-government is reenvisioned as a controlled form of self-loss. Although rational self-mastery remains an object of Christian ascetic discourse, as it is most pointedly in Petrarch’s *De remediis*, this reorientation of the Stoic is crucial not only to *Twelve Profits* but to the collections in which it circulated, which lay out for a London readership a form of interior mortification in which self-knowledge is supposed to come about through the creation of a break in the experience of subjectivity: that is, through the experience of conversion.

The vernacular work’s interest in analysis of this psychic break is apparent in the special attention it gives the theme of self-knowledge, the topic of the expanded and modified fifth “profit” that constitutes the climax of the first half of the treatise: that tribulation “revokith [restores] or bringeth þe to þe knowynge of þi-selfe.”⁸⁴ In the third “profit,” tribulation “purgiþe the soule,” we learn that one spiritual benefit of the providential destruction of worldly goods and affections—as of persecution, slander, social alienation, lack of patrons, and “deth of feythfull frendis”—is to ensure “þat the love of thine herte” rests in God, forsaking “the disseivable [deceptive] love of the world and the false frendship of synners.”⁸⁵ In the fourth “profit,” tribulation “ly3tneth [enlightens] þe to have þe knowynge of god,” we learn that another benefit is that “God makith hym-self to be knowen in betynge which [who] was for-yete [forgotten] & unknowe in his mercyfull sparyng,” so that the punishment of tribulation is comparable to the “yeftis, tokens, and prevy letters” that it is the “maner of lovers” to exchange with each other.⁸⁶ The fifth profit can then send the lay reader out into a modified and interiorized version of the eremitic desert, by claiming that the only way to attain the self-knowledge to which such experiences should lead is through ascetic withdrawal: for “þat hert þat hath not put a-wey fer from hym worldly veynglory may not trewly fele ne know hym-selfe.”⁸⁷

The standard lay means of gaining self-knowledge, through examination of conscience in preparation for aural confession, uses the rehearsal of interior states *as sin*—perhaps with the aid of a work such as *St. Brendan’s Confession*—to create a narrative framework for conceptualizing selfhood.⁸⁸ Rather than seeking to create any such coherent, penitential narrative, however, *Twelve Profits* asks readers to set out deliberately to fragment their worldly selves, turning from their present identity toward the mortified self-understanding that is their proper earthly home: “For as an howse in which noman dwellith, is wasted & fallyth to nouȝt; riyȝt so þe herte þat dwelliþe or abydiþh not with hym-selfe. Wo to þat herte þat renneth fro hym-silf all

abow3t like as doth a japer or a jogiller unto oþer mennys howsis; for þe mor he syngith & japith & joieþe in oþer mennys placis, þe more cause he fyndis in his owene place of sorrow & of wepynge.”⁸⁹ Tribulation supports the conditions for self-examination and spiritual growth because the broken, humbled self it forces into being is the product of conversion, a formal fissure in the experience of subjectivity that creates a new viewpoint from which the self can see the self: “Tribulacion is well necessary to þe herte to make hym turne unto hym-self, & it constreineth hym to seye with the prophet: *Reuertere reuertere, sunamitis, reuertere reueretere, ut intueamur te* [Song of Songs 6:12]. Torne a-yen þou my soule unto þi reste. & also oure lord god ... seith thus.... Turne a3ene, turne a3en þou wrecchid caitiffe soule, turne a3ene turne a3ene, ... þat þou behold þi-selfe with þe eye of conscience, & þat I mower [may] be-hold þe with þe eye of mercye.”⁹⁰ Constraining, knitting, and binding the baggy and easily diverted soul, adversity concentrates the experience of selfhood, forcing “þe hert to turn ... into hym-selfe,” whom “large fredom of þe world hathe lettun rynne longe louce [loose] fro þe-selfe.”⁹¹ Renunciation of the former vacuous and materialistic self is key to new self-knowledge and greater knowledge of God.

In the *Twelve Profits*, inward asceticism is hence the mark at once of the spiritually accomplished and of those separated from others by a deliberate act of reimagination of the self and its relationship to the world. It is the chosen path of those who can appreciate that “þe 3efte of aduersite” is “more schewynge [more of a manifestation] or tokyne of love of god þan þe 3efte of temporall prosperite” and follow Jesus, who like a “wise marchaunte used to ches good marchaundyse & refused þe bade,” rejecting the temptation of worldly glory for the sufferings of his passion and choosing to experience the world, even in its delights, as a place of mortification.⁹² The work is thus close enough to *Pety Job* to act as a guide to that work, but at the same time is also much more rationalistic, keeping its distance from the state of existential helplessness the poem associates with spiritual suffering even as it instructs readers to understand their lives through this category. Stoic detachment survives the break in the self of conversion, distancing the experiences evoked by the *Pety Job* speaker by insisting on their patient acceptance. If the lyric Job on his dunghill has cause to repudiate patience as he utters his cry to God, the reader of *Pety Job* who would profit from his or her tribulation, according to *Twelve Profits*, must not.

As a system for organizing into a coherent worldview the confusion and disarray of everyday life, the detachment urged by *Twelve Profits* is essentially hermeneutic in character, and as such it

furnishes those who practice it with a template for discerning the spiritual profit available, not only through life experiences but through textual ones such as a reading of *Pety Job*. Since they, too, concern the difficult maintenance of a coherent worldview, ascetic texts such as Cassian's *Conferences* place particular emphasis on the virtue or spiritual gift of discernment necessary to categorize both external and psychic phenomena correctly. In these texts the proper reading of experience and that of texts also go hand in hand. In the first of the *Conferences*, for example, the instruction on discernment Abbot Moses gives Cassian and his colleague Germanus turns on the need to see past the practices that seem to make up the ascetic life toward the purity of heart (*puritas cordis*) that is its final target, distinguishing means from ends and strategies from objectives, while applying the same distinctions to the Scriptures in which all truth is grounded.⁹³ As a result of the part played by discernment in eremitic literature, the interdependence of ascetic identity and sophisticated reading practice is a common emphasis of texts found in the group of vernacular ascetic books for the laity associated with Douce, whether through the challenges thrown out to the reader by the eremitic *Pety Job* itself or in the explicit discussions of monastic reading in Guido's *The Ladder of Foure Ronges* and Rolle's *Emendatio vitae*, both of which understand reading as such as only a starting point to prayerful understanding, the lowest step in the stairway that leads to the detachment from the world that is purity of heart.⁹⁴

Nowhere in the book however, are sophisticated reading practices more seductively urged than in Suso's *Learn to Die*, the first of Douce's three prose death texts. *Learn to Die* is a long excerpt from a widely circulated English version of Suso's *Horologium sapientiae*, *Seven Points of True Love and Everlasting Wisdom*, written for an unknown, apparently lay woman as one of a number of English vernacular responses to Suso produced from the 1390s on. Besides excerpts of *Seven Pointes* included in Nicholas Love's best-selling *Mirror of the Blessed Life of Jesus Christ*, these include portions of the popular *Chastising of God's Children* and two further translations of the *Learn to Die* chapter, not based on *Seven Points*, on its own.⁹⁵

A fragment of the immense textual tradition of one of the most popular religious texts of the later Middle Ages, the work at first seems a mere restatement of the penitential and communitarian topoi underlying the public death discourse exemplified by *The Daunce of Paulys*. But while, like all death texts, *Learn to Die* is full of these sentiments, it is a good deal less straightforward than this. With its elaborate writing, fine sense of the dramatic, and intricate formal and imaginative structure—a double meditation in the form of a three-way dialogue—*Learn to Die* at first draws us into the experience at its

center in somewhat the same way as *Pety Job*, through long, passionate monologues that reflect on an arresting and potentially universal predicament. Unlike *Pety Job*, however, *Learn to Die* explicitly discourages us from resting in our initial response, expelling us from the fictional situation it has briefly created in order to evoke an afterview that is surprisingly distanced, even ironic, as readers are left simultaneously engaged and disengaged by what they have seen. Rather than repeating moral lessons that all Christians need to hear and evoking feelings they need to share, *Learn to Die* is concerned to urge its devotionally literate readers to discern: to read, meditate, pray, contemplate, detach.

Learn to Die helps the reader, first, to “behold þi-selfe with þe eye of conscience,” as *Twelve Profits* puts it, through the imagination of the death of the self and of the soul’s existence in the next world; second, to effect an inner withdrawal from the world whose imagined nature is such that the laity can assume the ascetic identity it produces, dying to the world every day in their minds. The text is a double dialogue. The outer dialogue takes place between Wisdom and her disciple and works out from the disciple’s ignorant question: “Sitþen [since] hit is so þat deef 3evet nou3t [gives nothing] to man but rapen takeþ fro and priveþ hym of þat he haþ, wher-offe profiteþ þis doctrine of deþe?”⁹⁶ The inner one, which dramatizes Wisdom’s answer—that it is “a sciens most profitable and passing al oþer sciences for to konne dye”⁹⁷—takes place between the disciple and the figure of a bad death that Wisdom instructs him to bring into temporary, fictional being: “a feyre 3onge mon, þe which was sodenly overcome with deef ... and had not disposed for þe helpe of his sowle,”⁹⁸ so that he is in a panic, having heard in his soul the dolorous words: “Thow art the sone of deþ. Neþur rychesse neþur reson ne no kynnes men [kinsmen] neþur frendes mowen [may] delyver þe fro my hondes. Þe ende is come. Hit is demid [determined] and þerfor hyt must be done.”⁹⁹

Asked by the disciple how death, who everyone knows comes unexpectedly, could catch him unprepared, a dying youth tells of a spiritually dissolute past, time “unprofitably spended” when it “was graunted to me for to do penance,” and of “þe inordinate desire of worship, þe superflue cure of þe body, erþely love, and myche businesse abowte worldly lyvyng”—all the worldly ills that tribulation cures.¹⁰⁰ Now, because death is suddenly imminent—“right as fisshes ben kau3t with þe hoke ... so am I taken in an evele tyme”¹⁰¹—and despite initial pleas from the disciple that he not succumb to despair, the dying youth believes that it is too late for him to save himself from torment. Having advised the disciple elaborately on how to prepare for his own death, the youth dies, wailing and in great fear, inspiring the disciple to repent and allowing Wisdom the opportunity to add her

own advice on how to face the hour of death.

In outline, this *ars moriendi* appears to function simply as a cautionary tale, evoking the affect of fear in the reader, who is encouraged to repent in this world in order to die well and reduce time spent in purgatory. Salutory fear plays a privileged, if underappreciated, role in late medieval affective piety. In the *Sentences*, Peter Lombard draws on Augustine to make what became a canonical distinction between two kinds of fear, a higher fear, *timor filialis* or *castus*, by which a Christian who loves God fears to lose his love because of sin and so devotes himself or herself to virtue; and a lower fear, *timor servilis*, “when a man abstains from sin because of the fear of hell ... and it is by fear that he does whatever good he does: not by fear of losing the eternal good, which he does not love, but by fear of suffering the evil which he fears.”¹⁰² This distinction is made in precisely these terms in the Douce *Emendatio vitae*, which contrasts “a þrale drede [servile fear] þat only abstenes fro synne for drede of peyne of helle” and a “lufe-drede, þat is when þe childe dredes for-to offende þe fader.”¹⁰³ Just as representations of Christ’s humanity were meant to evoke the response of compassion and love, encouraging viewers “to approach the Divine through intimate knowledge and empathic experience of Christ’s humanity,”¹⁰⁴ so representations of death and the horrors of the next world were intended to evoke Lombard’s *timor servilis* as a crucial preparatory stage in the Christian’s approach to God. Both modes should properly be termed *affective* since both clearly engaged the soul’s affective faculty, understood to control the emotions, senses, and volition or will, orienting the soul away from the world toward God.¹⁰⁵

On the level of this generative but lowly fear, *timor servilis*, the reader of *Learn to Die* is invited primarily to identify with the biddable but limited disciple, who desires to learn the doctrine of death and eagerly summons the figure of the dying youth in his imagination: “Pan þe disciple ... began to geder [gather] alle his wittes from outward þyngges and in him self bisily considered and behyld þat lyknesse sette bfore him and þat was þere appered byfore him, þe liknes of a feyre 3onge mon.”¹⁰⁶ Matching in his mind the image suggested by Wisdom, the disciple animates a feigned figure to display the horrors of death, and in so doing follows a practice common in death meditation, which habitually involved conjuring fictional images of the future unknown—in distinction here to love meditation, whose most common object was the scripturally documented past events of Christ’s death and resurrection. *The Tower of All Towers*, the prose death text that follows *Learn to Die* in Douce 322, has an important description of this meditative death practice, which uses a careful combination of hope and fear, images of heaven and images of

purgatory and hell, to install virtue and drive out vice: “Þan 3if þou wolte lerne good and yuele, go fro home, go out of þiself, þat is go out of þis world, and lerne to dye; departe þi soule fro þi body bi þinkyng; send þin herte in-to þat oþer world, þat is in-to hevene or in-to helle or in-to purgatory, and þer þou schalt see what is good and what is yuele.”¹⁰⁷ The work further specifies that the reader “forȝet þi body ones a day, and go in-to helle while þou lyvest, þat þou come not þere whan þou are ded,” endorsing a practice of daily death meditation, almost a scripted visionary practice, found in several other texts in Douce and its associated manuscripts.¹⁰⁸

This is, indeed, the practice the dying youth recommends to the disciple, alongside a diet of “trewe contricioun and clene and hool confessioun,” in the first of two passages that construct fictional visions of purgatory near the end of *Learn to Die*. However, in Suso’s text, the dying youth makes one dramatic addition. In constructing this imaginative soul journey, the disciple is ordered to seek to recognize *himself*, a disembodied, forsaken soul, in among the suffering spirits he sees: “Put in þi hert as þei þi sowle were now in purgatorye and hadde in penaunce for þi trespasses ten ȝeer in þe furneyns of brennyng fyr.... And so beholde ofte syȝes þi sowle among þe brenyng coles crying to þe with a caarful voys and spekyng in þis manere: ‘O þu bestbyloved of alle frendes helpe þy wrecched sowle. Have mynde of me þat am now in so hard prysoun ... for I am forsaken of þis worlde. Þer nis none þat scheweþ kyndenes or þat wol putte his hond to helpe me nedy.’”¹⁰⁹ Any additional fear that this imagination of a future tormented self brings to the exercise can only be temporary. In seeking to encounter the self in this way, the disciple or reader must also experience the scene for the fiction it is, very different in character from the otherworldly visionary journeys on which death meditation was grounded and to which *The Tower of All Towers* alludes in its striking formulation “departe þi soule fro þi body bi þinkyng.” As a result, neither disciple nor reader is invited to experience any lasting sympathy with this potential future self, but rather to reject the doomed, terrified sinner identity it embodies for the embrace of an ascetic mentality and the different postmortem destiny this mentality makes possible. The reader who adequately learns to die will not end up wailing in the flames but “schalt so profite þer bi þan not onli þu shalt not drede to die but also þat deþ, þat is to alle lyvyng men dredful, þu schalt abide and receive with þe desire of þi hert, in þat hit is þe eende of travyle and þe begynnyng of felicity everlasting.”¹¹⁰

Discerningly seen and read, this first imaginative vision of purgatory—constructed in the conditional form, as exhortation, by a figure who is himself an imaginative construct—thus provides a

vantage point from which to examine the current, worldly self rationally, as well as fearfully, in order to break away from it, turning to face God in the manner also encouraged in tribulation texts. The second imagination of purgatory in *Learn to Die*, however, which features the dying youth himself, provides a different satisfaction for those readers who have already learned this lesson and so achieved the “gret abstraccioun fro þe worlde” also encouraged by the *Twelve Profits*: the confirmation of their identity as members of an ascetic elite superior to the “mony folk” who “turnen awei here faces þat þei wol not se into here ende.”¹¹¹

Rather than being a descriptive account designed to enable future affective meditation, this evocation of the next world is relayed in fictional “real time” by the dying youth himself who, after instructing the disciple from his unusually authoritative vantage point, addresses himself once again in desperate soliloquy, dying by degrees before the reader’s mind’s eye as he speaks: “But woe is me wrech. Where trowest þu [do you believe you] schal abide þis nyȝt, my spirit? Who schal take my wrecched sowle and wher schal hit be harborowed at nyȝt in þat unknowen contre? ... But what helpeþ hit to wepe or to multiplie mony bitter words? It is concluded and may not be changed.... Wo is me, now I se and knowe þat ... deep is at þe next dore. For loo, þe hondes unwieldy begynnon to rankle [wrinkle], þe face to be pale, þe siȝt to dasue [blur], and þe eyen to go in.”¹¹² As his external vision dims and the “eyes of [his] sowle” open, the dying youth becomes a despairing Dr. Faustus to the reader’s fascinated horror, seeing the “crwel beestes, þe horrible faces of develes and blake forshapen [misshaped] þinges withoute nombre ... aspying and abidyng my wrecched sowle” and the face of the “ryȝtwis domesman [judge],” “þe dredful siȝt of þe ryȝtwis justice þat is now present to me by drede and sodynli to come in dede.”¹¹³ Now at a liminal state between life and death, the dying youth sees the souls crying out for mercy and remembrance in the next world in the face of their forgetful friends and kin, and reports their terrible beauty:

Alas, me wreche, þer I se ... rising up flawmes of fyre and þe sowles of wrecked folk cast þerinne up and downe and to and fro þat rennen as sparkeles of fyre in myddes of þat brennyng fyre, right as in a gret towne al on fyre.... So þe sowles weymentyng [lamenting] for sorowe of her peynes crien everichone and seyen in þese woordes: “*Miseremini mei, miseremini mei. Saltem vos amici mei* [Wisd. 3:7].... Haveþ mercy on me, haveþ mercy on me, at þe lest ȝe þat ben my frendes. Where is now þe help of my frendes? Where ben now þe good behestes of oure kynnesmen and oþer by who inordinate affeccioun we tok no fors of our silf and so encresed we þis peyne to owre silf? Alas, whi have we don so?”¹¹⁴

“Þese þat I have now seide in my last passing I leve to þe as for a

mynde and so passing I dye,” ends the dying youth, as he vanishes from the text into his imaginary purgatory.¹¹⁵

The disciple’s response to the death of the dying youth is fear and horror. The sight of the image’s death provokes his final conversion (“I purpose me for to lerne to dye and I dispose me to amende my lif”) and turn from the comforts of the world (“Wherefore nowe do away from me, do awei þe softenesse of bedyng, þe preciosite of cloþþing, and þe slowþe of slepe me letting”).¹¹⁶ The response invited from readers, I think, differs, since the fact they are studying the treatise at all suggests they will not die unprepared like the dying youth. Instead, as Wisdom makes clear in the work’s conclusion, readers are now members of the select few who have knowledge of the doctrine of death, can prepare themselves, and, as they die, can perform the Anselmian exercise of fearful self-surrender we saw enjoined in *The Visitation of the Sick*, not out of timor servilis but from the respectful hope that is timor filialis: “But what tyme þu comest to þat houre in soþnes [in truth] ... þan is þere non oþer remedie but þat þu committe þe unto þe mercy of God oonly, and þat þu putte my passioun bytwixe þe and my dome.”¹¹⁷

Indeed, in a last imaginative meditation, Wisdom invites readers to distinguish their own fates from those of the “multitude” of the spiritually unenlightened who depart each day, the “great company” lost to purgatory or even hell because they died an “undisposed death”: “Lyft up þine eyen and loke about þe bisily and se how mony þer ben blynde in her [their] sowle and closen her eyen þat þei loke not in to her laste eende and stoppen here eeres þat þei heren not for to [be] converted and heled of synne.... How grete a multitude of breþeron and felowes and oþer of þi knowlech in so fewe 3erese ben gon before þe.... Aske of hem alle and seche of everychone and þei schullen teche þe and answere to þe wepyng and mornyng.”¹¹⁸ Whether the members of this multitude are damned or go, like the dying youth, to purgatory, converted readers understand themselves as categorically separated from them, possessed of the disposition and the lore the others wilfully lack, and able to contemplate their fate both with a fearful equanimity and with a kind of satisfaction. Following a long tradition, *Learn to Die* aestheticizes the sufferings of the next world for the pleasure of those who do not expect to share in them, using death meditation not only to inculcate fear but as a signifier of ascetic spiritual privilege.

True, there is much even for the converted elite to do: to lay aside “alle þinges þat schuld wyþdrawe” from death readiness; to “ordeyne for þi howse,” making the practical preparations crucial for wealthy laymen like Baron; and, like a hermit or a traveler, to watch and wait: “And þerfore ry3t as a travelyng mon stondyng in þe haven biholdeþ

[watches out for] bisily a shippe þat swiftly seileþ towards feer [far] contrees þat he wolde go to, leste þat his shulde overpasse [go without] hym, ryȝt so al þi lif and al þi wyrking be dressed and set to þat eende þat þu have a blessed obite [death] so þat þow may come to þat place of immortalite and everlastyng felicite. Amen.”¹¹⁹ But the duly prepared have to fear neither the abject terror of the dying youth, for whom even timor servilis comes too late, nor the torments of those they see in purgatory, abandoned, like Job, by friends and family but still dependent on their unpredictable post-mortem charity. Not quite a necessary member, now, of the dense network of spiritual obligation that bound fifteenth-century Londoners to each other, their city, and their dead—not needing to beg for the prayers of “even-cristen,” “the sooner of owr payne lesside to be,” as epitaphs like those of Baron’s father-in-law, Thomas Knolles, begged passing parishioners across the city—the reader of *Learn to Die* stands, imaginatively, alone: a “travelyng mon” already half gone, waiting for his ship to sail.

Ascetic Texts for Lay Londoners: Thomas Hoccleve’s *Series*

The ascetic emphasis of Douce 322, which I have tried to bring out in this long reading of three of its many texts, is so pronounced that scholars have, not surprisingly, tended to see it through the eyes of its second, female religious reader, Parnel Wrattisley, as a witness to the rich vernacular devotional culture of Dartford, and assumed that Baron bought and assembled the parts of the text with an eye to his granddaughter’s spiritual needs, not his own. Yet while the book can certainly be read for what it tells us about Dartford, even aside from the explicit lay address of many of its component texts, there are good grounds to link it directly to Baron. Not only did he write his name into the book’s flyleaf, he also had his coat of arms inscribed at the head of its second booklet, on the same page as the historiated initial *P* depicting God and Job at the beginning of *Pety Job*, and had his arms quartered with those of his wife at the foot of a leaf in the middle of a quire near the end of the book, beside the opening plea to conversion in Rolle’s *Emendatio vitae*.¹²⁰ These inscriptions, which parallel Baron’s use of his coat of arms to sign his personal psalter, Oxford, St. John’s MS 208, suggest a sense of personal ownership of at least the second and third parts of Douce and the vast majority of its contents, reminding us in the process that Baron may have owned the book, assembled or not, for up to twenty years before passing it on. All three booklets were laid out by a single scribe active in the third

quarter of the century (named the Trinity Anthologies scribe by Linne Mooney, from his work on two compilations now at Trinity College, Cambridge, both also constructed from booklets). While other dates around the midcentury have been proposed, Mooney dates his work on Douce to the 1460s, when Parnel would have been only a child, and it could be earlier as well as later.¹²¹

What is more, Douce 322 is not the only example of an ascetic lay book of its type associated with London laymen. In [Chapter 4](#), which deals with the only long death text in Douce not considered here, *The Book of the Craft of Dying*, we will encounter others, linked to Douce, some of which similarly moved between lay Londoners and their relations in female houses in the vicinity. These books repeat important aspects of Douce's textual arrangements. One book, London, British Library Harley 1706, incorporates the entirety of Douce's contents and appears to have begun as a direct copy of the earlier book, while no fewer than six juxtapose *Twelve Profits* and other short works on tribulation with *The Book of the Craft of Dying*, with or without *Learn to Die* and other death texts.¹²² Such repeated groupings, produced during the period William Caxton was setting up his print shop in Westminster, suggest to Mooney and other scholars that figures like the Trinity Anthologies scribe belonged to an incipient commercial book trade, offering partially standardized booklets to their clientele, rather than waiting for individual orders.¹²³ If so, this is an indication that, at least by the second half of the century, ascetic texts for the laity were understood as marketable items. This conclusion is equally suggested by one of Caxton's own last publications, the *Book of Divers Ghostly Matters* of 1491, in which he included *Twelve Profits* and its colleagues with a *Benedictine Rule* and the whole of *Seven Points of True Love* from which *Learn to Die* is an excerpt, all for the benefit of "wel disposed persones that desiren to rede or here ghostly informacions."¹²⁴ Books like Baron's will not have been common, but neither, it seems, were they unusual. A strong perfectionist tendency, its effect to emphasize links between privileged lay Londoners and enclosed religious institutions rather than parish churches, is an integral feature of the city's late medieval death culture.

Because books like Douce are suggestive of a broader shift in death culture before the early Reformation—toward a more interiorized, whether individual or small group, understanding of the *ars moriendi*—this book's chronological center of gravity, which with Baron has already moved forward from the first half of the fifteenth century into the third quarter, soon moves still further, first to the fourth quarter ([Chapter 4](#)), then to the first decades of the sixteenth century ([Chapter 5](#)). I end this chapter, however, by stepping back in time from the

book Baron was reading, perhaps, in the 1460s, to a last work from the early fifteenth century. This is Hoccleve's *Series*, his final composition, a group of five poems linked by the narrative of their writing that is one of its subjects. The poems are a lyric *Complainte* about the narrator's continuing social and personal troubles years after a mental breakdown; a *Dialogue*, between the narrator and a friend, which partly concerns the *Complainte* itself and the poem the narrator means to write next, *Lerne to Dye*; the story from the *Gesta romanorum* that the friend has him translate instead, *Jerelaus*, a tale about the travails of a virtuous empress of Rome, followed by an allegorization in prose; *Lerne to Dye* itself, which Hoccleve now adds, translated like its equivalent in Douce from Suso's *Horologium sapientiae*; and finally *Jonathas*, about an emperor's good third son and his evil mistress, also translated from *Gesta romanorum*, again at the behest of the friend, also with concluding allegorization in prose.

Begun in 1420—shortly before the founding of the Whittington almshouse and the completion of the London Charterhouse—the work predates by perhaps six years the death text with which it travels in five of its six full manuscripts, the A version of Lydgate's *Dance of Death*, and was finished a good forty years before the writing of the various parts of Douce.¹²⁵ Despite the time that separates the production of the *Series* and MS Douce 322, however, the two sequences of works belong to the same cultural moment. The *Series* may be earlier than *Pety Job* and the Douce *Twelve Profits*, but it is twenty years later than *Learn to Die* or the first English translation of the *De duodecim utilitatibus*, which also has London connections.¹²⁶ While the most famous copy of the *Series* was made by Hoccleve himself before his death in 1426 and a second copy is only a few years later, the rest are from the midcentury or after, two of them contemporary with Douce 322.¹²⁷ One of the three books that contain *Lerne to Dye* on its own (or, in one case, with the Roman narratives) may be from 1500 or after.¹²⁸ Most important, the *Series* participates in the same thought world as Douce, also bringing an *ars moriendi* text into contact with material on mortification, and also using the combination to construct a distinctive lay ascetic identity, made possible by experiences of suffering that separate the narrator from the common herd, raising him above his “even-cristen.” If the *Series* offers a useful perspective from which to view Douce, the latter is equally helpful in clarifying what is at stake in the *Series*.

This is significant inasmuch as the *Series* is not often interpreted as the expression of an ascetic religiosity with an *ars moriendi* at its heart.¹²⁹ Most analyses understand it, rather, as a work of rehabilitation: an attempt to return to Hoccleve's earlier public success with *The Regement of Princes* by proving his health, poetic competency,

and (through *Lerne to Dye* itself) narrowly conventional piety.¹³⁰ Objections have been raised to this view by scholars who see the *Series* as antagonistic to Hoccleve's old life as court poet, rightly noticing the work's anticomunitarian spirit, but here, too, analyses tend to be from a secular perspective that gives no clear role to *Lerne to Dye*.¹³¹ Even studies that do give this poem serious attention, for example, by viewing the dying youth as a literary projection of the state of isolation the narrator describes in the *Compleinte*,¹³² do not notice its place as the fulcrum of the *Series*. Crucially, *Lerne to Dye* is at once the poem the narrator announces will end his writing career ("I nevere pinke / More in Englissh after be occupied")¹³³ and the poem that the friend would prefer him not to write at all.

Exploiting both the broad connection between the experience of tribulation and the desire to produce exemplary autobiography described in *Pety Job* and the lessons in ironic detachment offered by Suso, the *Series* is a thoroughly literary reflection on the ascetic, interested in its discursive and aesthetic possibilities as much as in the actual instruction of the reader. Yet as our reading of these two texts has shown, in discussing the ascetic there is good reason not to drive too firm a wedge between the literary and the instructive. Especially in the prosperous lay instantiation in which we have encountered it in Douce, the ascetic is almost as much a matter of developing and publicly projecting a mortified persona as it is of the specific experiences around which it is organized. The opportunities Hoccleve saw in lay asceticism as a poet are not necessarily fundamentally different from those Baron saw as a book owner and reader.

Almy3ty God, as liketh his goodnesse,
Vesiteþ folke alday, as men may se,
With los of good and bodily sikenesse,
And amonge other, he for3at not me.¹³⁴

Opening his account of his sufferings in the *Compleinte*, Hoccleve immediately summons the language of tribulation, setting his narrative of breakdown, recovery, social ostracism, and personal trouble explicitly within the framework of discussions about suffering and its meaning. Unlike the Job of *Pety Job*, Hoccleve's narrator already has God's "gracious reconsiliacioun" of his body and his reason to be thankful for,¹³⁵ and claims to be responding appropriately, meekly keeping "scilence" when given "cause ... of anger and inpacience" by how others behave toward him, and not giving up hope his situation can improve.¹³⁶ But similarly to the poetic Job, he will not understand his sufferings as entirely due to personal sin. Instead, the narrator focuses on suffering's fragmenting effects on

a self alienated from a hostile world, shunned by friends who have marked him out as damaged and who refuse to acknowledge that “Man by hise dedis and not by hise lookes / Shal knowen be” and to “commune” with him as they did:¹³⁷

As seide is in þe sauter miȝt I sey,
“They þat me sy, fledden away fro me.”
Forȝeten I was al oute of mynde away,
As he þat deed was from hertis cherte.
To a lost vessel lickned miȝte I be,
For manie a wiȝt [person] aboute me dwelling
Herde I me blame and putte in dispreisyng.¹³⁸

Although this is the language of a mortified King David (Psalm 32:11–13), not Job, it expresses the same forsakenness, by humanity and God, and the same protest against this condition.

As with the suffering subject in *Twelve Profits*, the *Complainte* narrator’s alienation from and return to himself is expressed in physical terms. In his “wylde infirmitee,” the “substance” of his “memorie / Went to pleye as for a certeine space” and his body followed suit, as “heere and ther forth” he “stirte ... as a ro,” with feet “ay wavynge to and fro” and eyes that “soghten every halke [corner].”¹³⁹ Recovery, on the other hand, was a coming home, as his wit “retourne[d] into the place / Whens it cam,”¹⁴⁰ entering into its former accord with his being, even if the narrator still finds himself partly in pieces, seeing himself double, from without as well as within.¹⁴¹ So in the *Twelve Profits* the fragmentation caused by inordinate ambition and desire for the world can, as we saw, cause the “herte” to run “fro hym-silf all abowȝt like as doth a japer or a jogiller unto oþer mennys howsis,” until, desire quieted by the lesson of illness, failure, or any other tribulation, the soul learns to “dwell ... with hymsilfe” like a man living in his own “howse.” Hoccleve’s mode of self-examination in the *Complainte* is too concerned with the eyes of others to be yet an adequate response to the *Twelve Profits*’ plea to “behold þi-selfe with þe eye of concience.” But it already gestures toward the self-insight of the convert who has heard the call “Torne a-yeu þou my soule unto þi reste” of the Song of Songs.

The *Complainte*’s most explicit engagement with tribulation discourse is with Isidore’s *Synonyma*, identified by A. G. Rigg as the book of “a lamentacioun / Of a wooful man” that the narrator picks up and paraphrases in the last part of the poem, comforting himself with this famous seventh-century dialogue between a “hevy man” and “the speche of Resoun.”¹⁴² Reason reassures the “hevy man” that “to whom Goddis strook is acceptable / Purveied [provided] joie is,” and that “Golde purgid is ... in þe furneis, / For þe finer and clenner it

shal be,” preaching a message of patience and teaching Hoccleve’s narrator the same lessons: “Miȝte I have be founde in probacioun / Not grucching [grumbling] but han take it in souffraunce, / Holsum and wiis had be my governaunce.”¹⁴³ The poem can thus end with “Laude and honour and þanke” to God, “salve ... to al hevinesse,” and a mood of active, forward-looking resignation in the face of God’s “just doom”:

He ȝaf me wit and he tooke it away

....

And ȝaf it aȝein whanne it was to his pay.

He grauntide me my giltis to repente,

And hensforwarde to sette myn entente [fix my intention]

Unto his deitee to do plesaunce.¹⁴⁴

However, even as he uses the *Synonyma*, Hoccleve maintains a certain distance from its emphases. Isidore’s Christianization of Senecan and Ciceronian Stoicism in the *Synonyma* is partly penitential, depending on an understanding of suffering as punishment for sinful acts. The passage Hoccleve paraphrases closes with Reason advising the “hevy man” to confess to God that “To þee ... I have agilte / So sore I moot for myn offensis smerte, / As I am worthi,” as though there were, after all, a correlation between personal suffering and personal guilt.¹⁴⁵ But while the Hoccleve narrator acknowledges his general guilt as the poem ends, he never fully endorses his source’s correlation between sin and suffering, and the role the theme of tribulation as divine punishment plays in the *Series* as a whole remains subordinate to the theme of suffering as divine privilege also articulated by Reason. Indeed, Hoccleve marks the limits of the penitential theme by staging, just after Reason has given his advice, the first of the interruptions that punctuate the *Series*, as the owner of the copy of *Synonyma* the narrator is reading unexpectedly wants it back: “Lenger I þouȝte reed have in þis book, /.... He þat it ouȝte aȝen it to him took.”¹⁴⁶ As the abruptness of this passage suggests, the *Series* uses the *Synonyma* less as source than point of departure. More important to the poems that follow is an understanding of suffering as a mark not of sin but divine favor, bestowing on the suffering narrator a new and authoritative view of the world.

The narrator has to defend this view of suffering in the first part of the *Dialogue*, as his friend, pressing his way through “my chaumbre dore,” hears the *Complainte*, discovers that “Hoccleve” means to publish it, and advises him, for his “honours sake,” to “kepe al that cloos”—just as he later advises him, for the sake of his fragile health, not to embark on *Lerne to Dye*.¹⁴⁷ “Of Goddis strook ... / Ouȝt no man

to pinke reproof or shame,” the narrator retorts. On the contrary, it is his duty to “holden ... out” his divinely imposed suffering by making “thence an open shrift, / And hide not what I had of his 3ifte,” sharing his new understanding of the divine made possible by tribulation, as “a spectacle / In wiche that I biholde may and se, / Bet þan I dide, howe greet a lord is he.”¹⁴⁸ Far from seeking a return to his former life as an ambitious court poet, the narrator’s “lust” for making poetry, now that he is “fifty wintir and three” years old, with “ripenesse of deeth faste uppon” him, “is ny mortified.” His role, rather, is to advise others who are not yet detached from the world, especially on the correct attitude to fortune: “the wys man woot weel / How ful this world of sorwe is.”¹⁴⁹ This is his motive for wanting to translate “a smale tretice, / Wiche Lerne for to Die callid is,” as “a devoute man” has urged of him, both as an exercise in mortification (“to clense” his soul “by translacioun”) and to teach others “restreint ... fro vice.”¹⁵⁰

The friend, however, remains uneasy, especially when he learns that the “devoute man” for whom the narrator intends *Lerne to Dye* is Duke Humphrey of Gloucester, whose recent return “fro France” is another factor spurring Hoccleve to take “penne and ynke” again before he retires.¹⁵¹ In the early fifteenth century, Suso’s *Horologium sapientie* was beginning to circulate in noble circles and among rich bibliophiles like Duke Humphrey. For example, an illuminated copy of the *Horologium* in its 1386 French translation (now Paris, Bibliothèque nationale, MS fr. 926) was given in 1406 to the daughter of the Duke of Berry, Marie, Duchess of Auvergne, by her Franciscan confessor.¹⁵² Unknown to the friend, then, “Hoccleve” was showing the same astuteness toward French courtly fashions he had showed many years before in translating Christine de Pizan’s *L’Epistre de Cupide*, identifying early the turn to the ascetic on the part of the privileged laity we also see in Douce 322.¹⁵³ Yet he allows the friend to dissuade him temporarily from his novel enterprise and to talk him into translating a poem about a good woman’s sufferings, to show penitence for his literary sins against women. According to the friend, this is a proper task for “Lente, / In which it sit every man him repente,” and one that follows the older, secular courtly fashion exemplified by Chaucer’s *Legend of Good Women*.¹⁵⁴

Lerne to Dye is thus postponed for the sake of an exemplary narrative, *Jerelaus*, whose resolution turns on the logic of sacramental confession, in which acknowledgment of sin must precede its healing. Even after *Lerne to Dye* has been added to the *Series* and the narrator has decided “thus to han endid,” the friend insists on a second tale to complete the moral analysis undertaken by the first, in hope of persuading into virtue the friend’s rakish teenage son.¹⁵⁵ The two exemplary narratives and their *moralitates* which surround *Lerne to Dye*

thus keep the penitential in play to the end of the *Series*, but in closer relation to the worldly friend than to the narrator. Indeed, if we seek the narrator in these tales, we find him not among their penitents but with their twin healers, the empress and Jonathas, both tribulation figures whose sufferings, unconnected with personal sin, raise them to a moral level above that of their colleagues.¹⁵⁶

Isolated from the social context that frames most of the other poems, *Lerne to Dye* itself enters the *Series* without the knowledge of the friend, indeed with no narrative bridge:

Syn all men naturelly desyre
To konne, o eterne Sapience,
O universel prince, lord and syre,
Auctour of nature, in whos excellence
Been hid all the tresors of science,
Makere of al, and pat al seest and woost,
This axe Y thee, thow lord of mightes moost.¹⁵⁷

Having begun the poem after the moralitas that ends *Jerelaus* with its tropological application of the *exemplum* to the individual's need to do penance for his or her sins, Hoccleve then ends it, before the friend appears, with a moralitas of its own: an account of heaven and hell from a lesson for All Saints' Day attributed to Augustine.¹⁵⁸ *Lerne to Dye* is thus the single poem in the *Series* that the friend neither hears, reads, nor commissions. Isolated stylistically as much as structurally from the *Dialogue* and the exemplary narratives it generates, we may or may not still associate the poem with Humphrey of Gloucester. But we do identify it with the narrator's original stated moral purpose in writing in the *Dialogue*, one that clearly indicates how well, even before translating, he has internalized Wisdom's teachings:

For I not only but, as that I hope,
Many another wiȝt eke therby shal
His conscience tendirly grope,
And wiȝ himseilf acounte and reken of al
That he hath in this liif wrouȝt, greet or smal,
While he tyme hath, and freissh witt and vigour,
And not abide unto his deepis hour.¹⁵⁹

Although its dialogic structure mirrors that of the *Dialogue*, *Lerne to Dye* thus remains outside the friend's socializing sphere of influence, as the second half of the ascetic diptych that began with the *Complainte* and that the obtuse friend interrupts. The poem hence figures the narrator neither as the disciple who learns the "doctrine of death" from Wisdom nor as the dying youth, who does not know the

pain of sin until too late, but as the spiritually advanced reader, whose viewpoint is already that of Wisdom and who can thus enjoy, in pity and terror, the sufferings of those common folk not prepared for death in this life by the God-given gift of tribulation.

For the most part, *Lerne to Dye* translates the *Horologium* closely, although in canonizing it as a high-style poem in the Chaucerian tradition it consistently adds length as well as dramatic intensity, working with Suso's Latin in much the way *Pety Job* does with the office of the dead.¹⁶⁰ As in the Douce *Learn to Die*, the reader thus passes through various relationships with the work's characters: participating briefly in the timor servilis evoked by the dying youth; learning "nat oonly" not to fear death but to "desire faste / With al thyn herte it to take and receyve"; learning to judge the dying youth with the disciple; then at last passing beyond the disciple's viewpoint, to ponder with Wisdom the fearful sight of the souls in purgatory like "sparcles of fyr aboute sprede / What þan a gret toun set is on a lowe," and of "brethren, cousin, felawes and mo" going down to death carrying "hir olde synne."¹⁶¹

Indeed, Hoccleve hardens the work's attitude to sinners through the addition of his prose account of the heavenly Jerusalem where the good are rewarded and of the hell that awaits the evil, ending his work with an Augustinian justification of the eternal nature of divine punishment: "[E]very persone may resonably conceive þat in þat place of torment the peynes been merveilously sharpe and grevous. And yit for al þat smert [despite all that pain], if any ende sholde sue or folwe, that wolde yeve the soules right hy confort and greetly abregge and lesne hir grief; but awayte nat aftir [do not expect] þat, for it wole nat betyde, for right as the seid joies been eternal and aylastyng [everlasting], so been tho peynes infynyt and endeles."¹⁶² Earlier in the work, he also hardens Suso's critique of the communitarian logic of purgatory and prayers for the dead, adding material to the scene in which the dying youth, unprepared for death, cries out to his friends for "sum almesse, / Of th'abundance of hir goostly riches" and they deny him: "They seiden, 'Ther to yeven our assent, / Wole we nat in no maneere way, / Lest it us and yow nat souffyse may.'" ¹⁶³ Although this passage has been taken to suggest that the dying youth is here a figure for Hoccleve in the social death he has undergone after his illness, its logic is ascetic.¹⁶⁴ In Richard Kieckhefer's terms, by highlighting the limitations of public death culture, Hoccleve is evoking the "transcendence of conventional pieties" that went with the new, converted self in its "inwardness or interiority" in late medieval perfectionist discourse.¹⁶⁵

Far from seeking to reconcile himself to his community or regretting the inefficacy of spiritual friendship in helping sinners such

as the dying youth, the narrator thus looks forward to his future membership in that elite community of angels and perfected souls with whom, as one mortified from the world, he expects to rejoice in the heavenly city, the New Jerusalem: “Let thise thynges sadly synke into our hertes. Let us undirstande hem with ful feith. Let hem be beloved with alle our hertes. Let hem be goten by the greetnesse and by the multitude of goode wirkes and continued. This thyng is put in the might [within the power] of the wirker, for the kyngdam of hevene souffrith [allows] forcible and mighty assautes of vertu. O man, this thyng, þat is to seyn, the kyng dam of hevene, seekith noon othir prys but thyn owne self. It is as mochil worth as thow art. Yeeve thee [give yourself] and thow shalt have it.”¹⁶⁶ Despite the presence of the friend throughout the *Series*, learning to die in Hoccleve’s analysis is individualistic, focusing on shaping the soul to be less reliant on the potentially mechanistic economy of purgatorial prayers, with their attendant social forms of chantries and indulgences, and on the voicing of a poetic version of ascetic identity this reformulated religiosity makes possible.¹⁶⁷ “The kyngdam of hevene souffrith forcible and mighty assautes of vertu”: for all that they suffer the friend to divert them temporarily down more conventional pathways and, in so doing, keep reluctant channels of communication and teaching open to the wider community, Hoccleve’s last poems are thus an attempt both to represent his life in the spiritually heroic terms these words evoke and, in so doing, to lay out a poetic agenda suitable to his age and condition, in which the literary itself finds its proper object and consummation in the *ars moriendi*.

Wounded Texts and Worried Readers

The Book of the Craft of Dying

Lay Spiritual Ambition and the Growth of Anxiety

Chapter 3 describes the emergence of a body of London writing for the laity on tribulation, mortification, and death, much of it associated with the *Learn to Die* section of Henry Suso's *Horologium sapientiae*, as what it calls a "counterdiscourse" to the communitarian paradigm tracked in Chapters 1 and 2. Conscious of its separation from the norms of civic or parish religion, and paying relatively little attention to the spiritual possibilities and responsibilities of the household, ascetic writing understands its lay reader as isolated from Christian society, rather than connected to it by the bonds of obligation and trust that bind individuals together as "even-cristen," treating spiritual practices that rely on these bonds too heavily with fear and suspicion. The public spiritual duties assumed by London's civic and household governors were modeled on those of the secular church; texts found in manuscripts of the *Visitation of the Sick* E compare lay householders with bishops and curates, and London's governors seem to have understood themselves in similar ways, not least through the priority they gave to recruiting educated clergy for the city's parish churches. By contrast, ascetic writing takes eremitic literature, with its emphasis on the government of the isolated self, as its model. Although it understands the lay ascetic as having responsibility to others, it hopes to discharge this responsibility by exemplary showing, not hortatory telling—to be mimetic more than didactic. According to its own account of itself, Hoccleve's ascetic *Series* was meant to begin with the autobiographical *Complainte* and end with the exemplary *Leerne to Dye*. The work is pulled toward mainstream and pastoral understanding of the penitential only at the insistence of the friend.

Ascetic literature is counterdiscursive in an essential sense, in that it presupposes first, conversion, then the flight from secular society conversion announces. In early fifteenth-century lay London, however,

it was also counterdiscursive in the local sense that its influence among devout lay elites was limited. London texts for the laity promoting more specialized, individualistic, forms of devotion did exist. Several Middle English works advocating a lay contemplative life date from the end of the fourteenth century. These include *Fervor amoris* (or *Contemplations of the Love and Dread of God*), which offers laypeople what it understands as a limited version of eremitism; *Pore Caitif*, which builds them a ladder to heaven; and Walter Hilton's *On Mixed Life*, which details a limited contemplative program for their benefit. All these texts were in lay London circulation by the 1430s at the very latest, the last two as part of the testamentary "common profit" scheme for bequeathing religious books associated with the stationer John Colop, himself an associate, we saw, of John Carpenter.¹ Although many of its early readers seem to have been members of the religious orders, *On Mixed Life*, which specifically concerns the possibilities for lay participation in contemplative activity, was already owned by a member of Colop's circle as early as 1420, in a Hilton collection, also including *The Scale of Perfection*, whose copying was financed by the estate of the grocer John Killum (d. 1416), and which was later bequeathed to Colop himself.²

Until near the midcentury, however, the largest body of writing for the laity, even among the urban elite, seems to have been focused on the religiosity of the "active life"—pastoral in orientation, practical in outlook, often elaborately catechetical in content—that underlies the books from London and elsewhere, many of which contain the *Visitation of the Sick*, described in [Chapter 1](#). With roots in the insular tradition of vernacular and Latin pastoralia, including an important cluster of early fourteenth-century vernacular writings for the London laity studied by Ralph Hanna, but also in the more recent movement of laicizing reformist thought influenced by John Wyclif, these writings were energized by the desire to use religious teaching to regulate behavior at the social level—even if they also left space, as Fiona Somerset argues, for personal piety.³ The religious education of Londoners was a concern for laymen like Carpenter, as it was for his most famous clerical appointment, Reginald Pecock, underlying the latter's attempt to reformulate the pastoral program along more logical lines. For Pecock, "contemplation," when he uses the term, is mainly another term for knowledge acquisition.⁴ Despite his labors for the city and professional and personal interest in its pastoral care, Carpenter might have understood himself as a contemplative in the eremitic sense promoted by Hoccleve and *Pety Job*. But if so, the books that expressed this self-understanding are not among those catalogued in his will.⁵

As my analysis of Baron's book, Douce 322, suggests, however, by

the middle of the century the balance of “active” and “contemplative” religious modes in writing for the laity was shifting. A collection made for the use of a specific person, consisting of eremitic writings and death texts grouped together in ways also found in other lay books, Douce 322 is suggestive of the extent to which perfectionist writing for the laity was in the process of becoming mainstream:⁶ on the way to assuming the prominent role it came to play by the 1490s, when Caxton and his successor, Wynkyn de Worde, found a market, at least partly lay, for the Middle English Suso translation *Seven Points of Love and Everlasting Wisdom, The Chastising of God’s Children* (originally written for nuns), Hilton’s *Scale of Perfection, Fervor amoris*, and other spiritually ambitious works.⁷ It is also suggestive of the variety of traditions on which London lay asceticism drew and of the part played by recent imports from Europe, exemplified by Suso’s *Learn to Die* and *The Book of the Craft of Dying*, the text at the center of this chapter.

This last point is worth stressing, since the appearance of these two works in Douce 322 and other books produced from the mid-fifteenth-century onward is a sign at once of the internationalization of London lay piety that accompanied its turn toward the perfectionist and of the prominent place of death discourse in this important process. For to the extent that spiritual perfectionism became a mainstream concern of devout lay Londoners, they themselves joined the international mainstream: falling into step, some decades behind, with their counterparts in urban centers across much of Continental Europe, especially its Germanic-speaking regions, for whom prestige lay piety had been converted piety since at least the late fourteenth century.

Scholars of German lay piety, such as Berndt Hamm, or of the Dutch “modern devotion,” such as John van Engen, have explored the theological and social logic of fifteenth-century milieux in which the embrace of a mortified lay identity was common enough to form the basis of lay and semilay communities such as the Sisters and Brothers of the Common Life, organized with an ascetic rigor that makes them resemble lay versions of a charterhouse more closely than they did London’s “active life” lay religious institutions: its hospitals, colleges, and almshouses.⁸ According to Hamm, perfectionist rhetoric and praxis had a widespread influence on the piety of the cities and towns of late medieval northern Europe. During the fifteenth century, indeed, spiritual perfectionism came to constitute a practical problem for pastors in dealing both with their more spiritually serious parishioners, newly beset by fits of scrupulosity, and with the less serious, whose failure to rise to the level of the new piety was all too manifest.

Hamm points, in particular, to a careful program of minimalization of the criteria for salvation (*Minimalisierungsprogramm*), developed on

various theological premises by German pastoral thinkers in the last years of the fifteenth century, including the Augustinian friars Johannes von Palz (d. 1511), a colleague of Martin Luther at Erfurt, and Johannes von Staupitz (d. 1524), Luther's prior during the same years. Such a program, he argues, had come to seem necessary during the previous hundred years to counteract the sense of inadequacy caused by the language of conversion and perfection in widely disseminated texts such as Suso's *Horologium sapientiae* (c. 1357) and Thomas à Kempis's ascetic best-seller *De imitatio Christi* (c. 1425).⁹

With its emphasis on the necessity of facing spiritual difficulty and its valuation of intention and purity of will over action, perfection language could lead to spiritual crisis, especially late in life, among those whose catechetically oriented religiosity was inadequate to the "internalization and intensification of the criteria of piety" that typified perfectionist discourse and the "sharper diagnosis of human spiritual inadequacy" to which it led.¹⁰ Even on the deathbed, it might not be possible for all to feel the love of God and sorrow for sin that they should. One of several solutions to the problems introduced by the "volitional inadequacy" of those in this state was anticipated by Suso himself, more than a century earlier, who argued through the mouth of Wisdom that, for the spiritually dry, it was enough to *intend* to experience compassion, love, and desire.¹¹ The failure to achieve the true contrition that is a precondition for penitence can itself be offered to God.

In early fifteenth-century lay London, versions of such anxieties were no doubt to be found, but they do not make urgent sense in a pastoral world in which practices—obedience to the Ten Commandments, fulfilment of the works of bodily mercy—tended to weigh more strongly than intentions, and in which perfectionist discourses that do stress intentions often explicitly understand themselves as operating according to criteria not applicable to ordinary Christians. In book 2 of *The Scale of Perfection*, for example, Hilton makes a careful distinction between ordinary, active-life Christians who have undergone "the reformyng in feith" that "sufficeth to savacioun" and contemplatives, who aspire to the "passande mede in the blisse of hevene" that comes from "reformyng in feith and in felyng," limiting his discussion of the risks and rewards of spiritual perfection to the one without prejudice to the eternal prospects of the other.¹² Works such as the first Middle English translation of William Flete's *De remediis contra temptationes*, a mid-fourteenth-century tribulation text that influenced Hilton, or the *Goad of Love*, perhaps Hilton's own translation of the pseudo-Bonaventuran *Stimulus amoris*, suggest that, before the English mid-fifteenth century, spiritual anxiety was far more likely to be a religious than a lay

phenomenon.¹³ Intensely aware of the dangers lurking in her specialized spiritual existence, Margery Kempe is an early lay adopter of a perfectionist religiosity that can lead her both to fear for her salvation and to worry about intention. But her *Book*, the product of a region of England unusually porous to Continental influence, East Anglia, was finished only in the late 1430s.¹⁴

As Eamon Duffy has argued, versions of what he terms “traditional” parish religion, with its pragmatic emphases on practices designed to save the souls of all but the most obdurate, continued in vigorous existence, in London as elsewhere, into the sixteenth century.¹⁵ However, as ascetic lay texts such as those collected in Douce 322 appeared in increasing numbers in the decades immediately around when the book was copied, lay Londoners began, as Jennifer Bryan puts it, to “look inward” with increasing regularity, consciously imitating eremitic and monastic religious modes and adopting the spiritual aspirations and anxieties that go with them.¹⁶ The always porous divide between late medieval professional religious and the laity, explored in relationship to women’s reading by Mary Erler, Felicity Riddy, and others, allowed for a distinctive kind of monasticization of elite (female and male) lay identity.¹⁷

The perfectionist trend in later fifteenth-century London lay religiosity offers a suggestive context in which to place *The Book of the Craft of Dying*, the work at the center of the cluster of death texts in Douce 322 and several other books, and the most important successor to *The Visitation of the Sick* produced between the fourteenth century and the English Reformation. The work is a careful and apparently fairly close translation of a widely circulated Continental Latin death text, the *Tractatus de arte bene moriendi*, itself a much altered descendant of the *De scientia mortis*, the third and final part of Jean Gerson’s *Opusculum tripartitum* (1405–14), a widely used set of religious instructions on the commandments, confession, and the death ritual.¹⁸ Likely of Austrian origin and produced in the ambit of the Council of Constance (1414–18), at which Gerson was a leading figure, the *Tractatus* ambitiously aims at a mixed lay and religious audience and became as popular as the *Opusculum* itself across a wider geographical area. Besides giving rise to a celebrated, if rather distantly related, woodcut *ars moriendi*, “Quamvis secundum,” based on a descendant text that works outward from the *Tractatus*’s discussion of temptations, the work survives in various forms in over two hundred Latin manuscript copies, over a hundred German, Dutch, Italian, Spanish, French, and English ones, and some fifty early printed editions, all produced within a century after its initial composition.¹⁹

The earliest manuscripts of the English translation, based on an

untraced Latin manuscript relatively close to the Latin *Tractatus incunabulum* consulted here (Guy Marchant's Paris edition of 1499), date from perhaps the 1430s but are clustered a good deal later, in the third and especially fourth quarter of the fifteenth century.²⁰ Typically, the work appears in religious compilations, sometimes with carefully grouped catechetical writings, more often with ascetic or contemplative works, from Nicholas Love's *Mirror of the Life of Christ* to the writings of Hilton, to Suso's *Learn to Die* and other works we have seen formed part of Douce 322 and its related manuscripts, prominent among them the anonymous *Treatise of Ghostly Battle*.²¹ There are twelve copies in all, almost all from London or the area around it. Like Douce 322, the majority of these belonged to members of London's wealthy laity, although others belonged to nuns. Many are related to one another in ways that suggest that small groups of texts, in which the work appears with other death and tribulation texts, were available for copying as booklets.

This evidence of intensive, if localized, copying and use, which apparently did not extend to other urban centers, is consistent with the publication of two other versions of the *Tractatus* by William Caxton: *The Art and Craft to Know Well to Die* (1490), Caxton's own abridgment of a close but somewhat expanded mid-fifteenth-century French translation; and *The Craft for to Deye for the Helthe of Mannes Sowle* (*Ars moriendi*) (1491), a more serious abridgment of a different French translation, published at the same time and in the same typeface as *The Book of Divers Ghostly Matters*, which includes Suso's *Seven Points*, with its important "learn to die" chapter discussed earlier.²² Starting in the 1460s and reaching a peak near the end of the century, versions of the *Tractatus de arte bene moriendi*, with the *Craft of Dying* prominent among them, evidently made an increasingly vital contribution to the religious culture of educated lay Londoners.²³

As our enquiry into fifteenth-century London death discourse moves toward the early sixteenth-century Reformation, the *Craft of Dying* and its early print siblings provide us with a significant example of the part played in London lay religiosity by Continental death texts and the spiritual models they promulgate. [Chapter 3](#) sketched a picture of pious laymen, like Baron, isolated in their spiritual identities by the mortified interior dispositions they learned to cultivate through death meditation. Here, these same pious laymen and their books appear in a different guise, as early adopters of a new way of dying outlined in the *Craft of Dying* that partly works against this isolationism, since it requires a specialist death community to be properly performed. Indeed, although death *rehearsal* remains an individual practice, death *performance* demands the reconstitution of a renewed version of the communitarian religiosity long practiced by

the generality of Londoners. In the *Craft of Dying*, deathbed attendants, performing a specialist version of their work of mercy, again play a key role as “even-cristen.” The work in fact has similarities with *Visitation E* and may have been used in similar household contexts.

With this shift back to community, however, comes an unexpected shift in atmosphere. In exploring the practice and poetics of lay asceticism, with its cultivation of an ironic distance from a world understood as a place of tribulation, [Chapter 3](#) emphasized the productive and pleasurable nature of the perfectionist rhetoric of suffering, isolation, and death that characterizes lay ascetic texts: the result of an assumption of spiritual privilege on the part of the reader and a concomitant expectation of coming spiritual reward. By contrast, in ways directly evocative of Hamm’s account of late medieval German piety, the *Craft of Dying* is full of spiritual anxiety.

The *Tractatus* and its translations address a readership comprising professed religious and secular priests as well as the laity, and we might expect that any religious work aimed at such a general audience to be at once basic, general, and minimalist. Yet as we see in the second section of this chapter, rather than bearing witness to the simplification often associated with the late-medieval process we call “laicization,” the work instead witnesses a crisis of confidence in the belief that the *ars moriendi* can create a saving habitus in practitioners. Placing extraordinary emphasis on the shaping of a correct interior disposition through lifelong death preparation, and downplaying the role of external elements such as the sacraments and priestly absolution, the work invests its hope in readers’ salvation in its ability to teach them how to form a sufficient and saving attitude of repentance. Yet while it emphasizes the availability of divine mercy for those who truly seek it, occasionally veering into language about the ease of salvation suggestive of the late fifteenth-century pastoral *Minimalisierungsprogrammen* outlined by Hamm, it is all too aware of the limits of any “craft,” however careful, to fashion an intention or test its veracity, returning repeatedly to the problem of spiritual authenticity at its core. As a result, the *Craft of Dying* leaves the reader without any surety as to where salvation lies and how hard it is to obtain.

In seeking to explore why the work makes such aggressive spiritual demands on the widest possible readership, the third section of the chapter turns to the *Tractatus* itself. This begins with a brief account of Gerson as a conciliarist and pastoral theologian and of *De scientia mortis*, the portion of his *Opusculum tripartitum* that lies behind the *Tractatus*; then moves to discuss the *Tractatus* as an outgrowth of the reformist thought of the Council of Constance and, specifically, the

University of Vienna. The *Tractatus* was evidently written in a milieu conscious both of a general need for reform in the wake of the schism and of the threat posed by Hussitism, a descendant of England's Wycliffism. While we can give different explanations for the fissures that run through the work and assessments of its success in pulling them together, the work is the product of a milieu much concerned over the other fissures then running through the church, and it is hard not to see the anxieties it inculcates in readers as analogous to these wider anxieties.

The *Craft of Dying* circulated in a London experiencing its own fissuring processes, initially associated with the violent, shifting political terrain of the Wars of the Roses (1455–87), which cast a shadow over the reign of Henry VII, later with the early stages of the Reformation. Returning to the city and its inhabitants, the final section of the chapter thus moves to consider the work in light of the careers of several of its lay readers, some of whom may have participated in the seemingly productive lay piety of William Baron, others of whom very much did not, as the work passed from relation to relation, sometimes in and out of local religious houses, down to the middle of the sixteenth century. A prestige work of Continental piety, the *Craft of Dying* may not have directly recalled the work's origins in conciliarist controversies for later lay readers, even when related controversies returned to England in the early sixteenth century. But this anxious work does not have to remember any particular past moment of cultural stress; it has plenty of present stresses to interact and contend with. To borrow language from Paul Strohm's *Politique*, in late fifteenth-century copies of the *Craft of Dying* and their users, a wounded text meets a wounded era.²⁴

Mastering Death: Reason and Self-Examination

For as much as the passage of death out of the wretchedness of the exile of this world for unknowing of dying [ignorance of how to die], not only to lewde [uneducated] men but also to religious and devout persons, somewhat wonderfully hard and right perilous, and also right fearful and horrible; therefore in this present matter and treatise, that is of the Craft of Dying, is drawn and contained a short manner of exhortation for teaching & comforting of them that be in point of death. This manner of exhortation ought solely to be considered, noted, and understood in the insight of man's soul. For doubtless it is and may be profitable generally to all true Christian men to learn and have the craft & knowledge to depart well.²⁵

A how-to manual that concerns the best way to go about making a

good death but is addressed as much to the attendants at a deathbed as to the dying person, the *Craft of Dying* synthesizes and codifies existing liturgical and pastoral material, old and new, into a template that could be used to give shape and design not just to one's own last moments but to those of one's neighbor. Some eight thousand words long, the work is divided into six chapters of roughly equal length, each listed in the work's preliminary table of contents and later given its own, careful heading. The first chapter offers a commendation of death, defining "to konne dye" as "to have an herte and a soule ever redy up to Godward." The second describes the five principal temptations "of men þat dyen": doubt, despair, impatience, complacency, and "occupacyon & besynes outwarde aboute temporal thynges," with their remedies. The third gives two series of interrogations "þat shold be asked of hem þat ben in her deth bed, while þei may speke & understonde": the first based on the Anselm questions also used in *The Visitation of the Sick*, the second associated with Jean Gerson. The fourth provides a set of prayers for the dying that allows them to imitate the five actions Christ performed in his last hours on the cross: praying, crying, weeping, commending the soul to God, and yielding up the spirit. The fifth gives instructions to the deathbed attendants, with a strong emphasis on the need to withhold false comfort and to insist the dying person face up to the eschatological reality of the moment, "though he shulde and wolde gretly be affered [terrified] thereof." The sixth offers English versions of the prayers "that shold be seyde upon hem [for the sake of those] that ben a-dieng of [by] som man þat is aboute hem." Succinct, methodical, and written in a formal prose as suggestive of legal as of pastoral discourse, the work wastes no time in announcing its relevance to "alle trewe Cristen men" and its claim to the reader's prolonged attention, "in the insyght" of his or her "sowle."²⁶

Like the *Visitation of the Sick*, the *Craft of Dying* is interested in death as a this-worldly phenomenon, emphasizing the temporal aspects of dying well and giving none of the detailed attention to the afterlife we find in Suso's *Learn to Die* or the late thirteenth-century *Tower of All Towers*. From its very introduction, however, we see a number of elements that differentiate this ars moriendi from the *Visitation*. Two of these are in evidence even in the brief introduction to the work quoted above. First, by addressing itself "not oonly to lewde men but also to religious and devoute persones," the work explicitly welcomes the widest possible readership. Men, women, lay, and religious, "alle trewe Cristen men" should read and study the craft the book teaches and are in equal need of education in the good death. While *Visitation*'s terse introductory rubric, "How men þat beþ in hele scholde visite seke," suggests a work newly reaching out

toward lay readers, the *Craft of Dying* consciously lists the main categories that order the medieval church. We will return to this careful representation of audience later.

Second, the work identifies its task as “techyng & confortyng” at least as much as ritual instruction. Although the *Visitation* also devotes a section to words of consolation (“How a man schold counforten anoþer þat he grucche not wan he is seek”), the thrust of the earlier text is to offer help for the job at hand, visiting the sick and the dying. In contrast, the *Craft of Dying* spends much its length in “confortyng” accounts of the nature and positive aspects of mortality. Where the *Visitation* is largely a performance script, the *Craft of Dying* is as preoccupied with presenting educative material on death for readers to reflect on in preparing for their twin roles, as deathbed attendants for others and as the dying person, as it is with the deathbed itself.

Despite the generality of its address, in its description of its “craft,” the treatise assumes that its readers not only have some doctrinal knowledge but have a degree of what Vincent Gillespie calls “devotional literacy.”²⁷ A passage of chapter two indeed recalls the devotional praxis of passion meditation, offering a passage of pseudo-Bernard as a remedy for despair: “Seynt Bernard seyth thus: ‘What man is it that shold not be ravissed & drawe [drawn] to hope and to have ful confidence in God, and [if] he take heed diligently of the disposicyon of Cristys body in the cros? Take hede & se his heed is enclyned to salve the [greet you], his mouthe to kysse the, his armes y-sprad [spread out] to clippe [embrace] the, his handes y-thrilled [pierced] to yeve [give to] the, hys syde opened to love the, hys body alonge streyght [stretched straight out] to yeve al hymself to the.’”²⁸ In general, however, the *Craft of Dying* is not an affective text but a consciously rationalist one. Like *Learn to Die*, the work presents the reader with material to aid in the mental projection of the self forward in time to the moment of death. But where *Learn to Die* uses the dying youth to provide a vivid evocation of the fear of death, generating timor servilis in a temporary way in order to induce and solidify the reader’s conversion, the *Craft of Dying* is for the most part more interested in the management of fear as a natural but (for that very reason) also disruptive and negative force that needs to be contained by the government of reason: “[S]yth, as it is afore sayde, we may not in noo wyse neiþer fle [in any way either flee] ne ascape neither chaunge the inevitable necessite & passage of deth, therfor we aughten to take our deeth whan God wyl, wylfully and gladly, withoute eny grucchyng [complaining] or contradiccyon, thorough the myght & booldnesse of the wylle of oure soule vertuesly disposed and governed by reson & verray [true] discrecyon, though þe leude sensualite & freelte [ignorant softness and frailty] of oure flessch

naturely grucche or strive ther ayenst.”²⁹ Occasionally, it may be necessary to induce a “holsom fere and drede” in a dying person whose contrition seems insufficient, in order to urge him to “use reson asmoche as he may.”³⁰ Usually, however, while the “wylle of oure soule” must be engaged with “myght & booldnesse” in the process of dying, its task is mastery of the “sensualite,” not the latter’s deployment to arouse feeling in strategic devotional exercises such as meditations on the passion and the afterlife.

As the word “craft” (or *ars*) vividly suggests, the only way to arm the reason and will to perform their difficult functions is to prepare them thoroughly in advance and precisely *not* to rely on the thoughts and feelings natural to the moment: “And what man that ... wyl gladly dye wel & seurlly [confidently] & merytorily [meritoriously] withoute perel, he must ... lerne diligently this crafte of dyenge ... whyle he is in hele ... for in trouthe, dere brother or suster, I telle the soth, beleve me therof, that whan deth or gret syknesses fallith upon the, devocyon passith oute fro the.”³¹ As in almost all the death texts we have considered in this book, Stoic thought again provides an essential paradigm for Christian death preparation: as “Seneca sayth,” “*Sic vis ista cum quibus vrgeris effugere, non vt alibi sis oportet sed alius.*” If thou wilt escape that that thou art streightly be trapped ynne [something in which you are firmly constrained], it nedith not that thow be in anoper place but that thou be another man.”³² Studied well and thoroughly, the *Craft of Dying* allows its reader to become a different person in the face of death, a convert who will not die shamefully, grouching against God, destined for purgatory or even damnation. The new man the *ars moriendi* produces is knowledgeable, prepared for the inevitable, and able to direct his affective responses in his last hours into productive love and worship of God.

The text prepares the reason, shaping a knowledgeable and prepared mental habitus by walking the reader in detail through a hypothetical deathbed scene, from the onset of deathbed temptations to the “interrogacions” designed to examine and correct the dying person’s faith and disposition, to the prayers to be said both by and for the dying person. As in the *Visitation*, various possible scenarios are described and discussed. Any knowledgeable person can conduct the interrogations, but if nobody has the competence to do so—“for ther ben right fewe that have the konnyng of thys crafte of dyenge”—the dying person must “remembre himselfe in his soule, and aske himself, & sotelly fele & conside whether he be so disposed.” If death is slow, the dying person’s favorite devotional books can be read aloud: “devoute histories & devote praiers in the whiche he delited moost ynne whan he was in hale.”³³ If death is rapid, on the other hand, and the dying person can no longer speak—although “it is gretly to be

charged & hasted that the interrogacyons be made unto hym” before this happens—the dying person can make “som utter [outer] signe” of assent to the interrogations and prayers, or answer them “with concent of hert” only.³⁴

In all such situations, it is vital to remember that the stakes are as high as can be, so that mere goodwill in preparing for one’s own or another’s deathbed is not enough. Sustained attention to these and other instructions can make the difference between salvation and damnation: “In this matere that is of oure last & moost gret nede, al manere of poyntes & sentences therof, with adverbs also that ben put therto, sholden moost sotelly & diligently be charged & considred of every man, for asmoche as there shal no man be rewarded for his wordes allone bot for his dedes also joyned & accordyng to his wordes.”³⁵ In a real sense, indeed, the text represents itself and the preparation it teaches as standing between the reader and hell: “O lord God, how many, yhe withoute nombre, that han abyde [delayed] so in to her last ende,” failing to get ready as they should have done, that they “han forsloughed & deceyved himself everlastyngly?”³⁶ The work’s careful textual layout, attempt at comprehensive coverage of death situations, and scrupulously articulate and thorough phraseology (down to its “adverbs”), are all signs of its self-understanding as a vital part of the spiritual armature of every “trewe Cristen.” In [Chapter 1](#), we saw how *Visitation* E circulates in manuscripts often organized around expositions of the catechetic items in Pecham’s Syllabus, as it were as a gloss on the corporeal works of mercy, but also as a crucial item in its own right. The urgency that energizes the *Craft of Dying* suggests that, as the fifteenth century wore on, the *ars moriendi* was becoming not merely an essential but a central component of the pastoral program for devout Londoners.

As will be obvious from the foregoing, the *Craft of Dying* places substantial responsibility on the dying person for her or his own salvation, continuing in dramatic style the late medieval shift of emphasis from priest to the dying person tracked through the Sarum rite and *Visitation* A and E texts in [Chapter 1](#). The *Visitation* instructs the dying person to assent to its own, brief set of interrogations in the faith and, in the language of the Anselm questions, to cast the soul on the mercy of Christ. The *Craft of Dying* exhorts the dying in the same terms as the *Visitation*, but now as only a late gesture in a long process of thought and prayer by which the “trewe Cristen” rehearses the ritual and the psychic forms of the deathbed drama, potentially organizing much of life around its inevitable end. If we think of the work as the center of a book such as Douce 322—recalling that Baron’s colophon to this book describes its contents as including

“specyally the tretis þat is callid ars moriendi”³⁷—we can see how much of the cultivation of an ascetic self enacted by the book could be turned into material to prepare the reason and will in the quasi-monastic fashion the *Craft of Dying* insists is required: “ought every man, not oonly religiouse but also every good & devoute Cristen man ... lyve in suche wyse & so have himself alway that he may savelly dye every houre whan God wyl.”³⁸ Despite the work’s focus on planning and its attempt to reduce the unpredictable and fluid nature of the deathbed to a learnable praxis, it belongs among the perfectionist texts in Douce 322 that mark the “inward turn” of later fifteenth-century London lay religiosity.

Somewhat less obvious and, in relation to Douce 322, less expected, is the extraordinary role the work gives to the deathbed attendants, who here do far more than stand as the witnessing “even-cristen” they are in the Sarum rite and even in the *Visitation*. As we saw, *Visitation* E recasts the visitation rite in ways that suggest its adaptation for the use of the lay paterfamilias, carrying out one of the traditional corporal works of mercy in a formal and elaborate fashion that allows it to double as an act of quasi-sacerdotal spiritual governance. The *Craft of Dying* potentially gives laypeople at least this degree of authority, but tends to diffuse it through the entire group of attendants. While any attendant competent to do so can conduct the interrogations and prayers, the work several times obliges the whole group to function as a collective or “covent”: “Than let him say thys thryes: *In manus tuas, Domine, commendo spiritum meum*. In to thyn handes, Lord, I committe my soule. And let the covent say the saam. And yf he may not speke, let the covente or they that stonde about him say thys: *In manus tuas, Domine, commendamus spiritus eius*. Into thyn hondes, Lorde, we commende hys soule. And thus he dyeth seurlly, & he shal not dye everlastyngly.”³⁹ As in the *Visitation*, the dying person is instructed to say a sentence drawn from Psalm 30:6 to aid his or her transition to the next world. But here it is the “covente” that speaks for the dying when he or she cannot, and in the process apparently ensures the person’s final salvation.

Even more striking, the Latin prayers normally spoken by the priest in the presence of the recently dead and the deathbed witnesses are said by the whole “covent” and in English:

Last of alle, it is to be knowen that the praieris that folewen mown be conveniently saide upon a sike man that labourith to hys ende. And yf it be a religiouse persone, than whan the covent is gadred togidre with the smytynge of the table as the manere is, than shal be seyde first the letanye with the psalmes & orysones that ben used perwith. Afterward, yf he lyve yhit [is still alive], let sum man that is aboute hym say the orisons that folwen after, as the tyme & oportunte wyl suffre; and they mowen be

often rehersed ayen to excite the devocyon of the syke man, yf he have reson and understondynge with him.... Bot amonge seculers that ben syke, let þese prayers be sayde, as the devocyon & disposicyon & the profyt of hem & other that ben aboute hem asketh & requireth, & as þe tyme wyl suffre.⁴⁰

Here the “covent” is initially defined in specific relation to religious readers of the *Craft of Dying* and the *Tractatus*, as the reference to the Benedictine practice of “beating of the board” to call monks to a deathbed makes clear, but the passage shows only slight hesitation in enjoining a similar monastic practice on “seculers,” lay and other.⁴¹ In consequence, laypeople using the treatise here become directly analogous to a religious community, saying the final Commendatio animae and other important liturgical prayers (perhaps without the extended framework of the litany and psalms) to help stabilize the devotional focus of the dying and maximize the spiritual edification the occasion provides for themselves. No mere random assembly of “even-cristen” but a formally constituted community, the “covent” is here understood to have sufficient collective knowledge of the art of dying to take over many of the functions of the priest: a community of Christians capable of performing the equivalent of a sacramental role by helping someone to make a good death.⁴²

The *Craft of Dying* enjoins that everyone in danger of death should “make ... pees with God ... takynge the sacramentes of Holy Chirche,” while, at the deathbed itself, the dying must be exhorted to “procure himself hys soule hele by verray contricyon & confessyon,” a process that would usually require the presence of a priest.⁴³ Actual priests must have attended the late deathbeds where the practices enjoined in the *Craft of Dying* were followed. But except in these brief passages, which both refer to preparatory stages of the deathbed process, when sickness first becomes apparent, there is no sign of them in the text. Greatly expanding the nonsacramental elements of the death rite such as the interrogations themselves, the work otherwise describes the deathbed scene as a continuous thing, without gaps in the narration during which further sacramental interventions could take place.

There is nothing here of *Visitation* E’s implicit celebration of the ability of the laity to make a good death without the help of a priest if no “trew preeste” is available.⁴⁴ Indeed, the absence of clergy and others educated in the ars moriendi is a cause of lament: “But allas ther ben ful fewe, not only amonge seculers but also in dyverse religions, that han the konnyng of this crafte & wyle be nye [close by] & assiste to hem that ben in poynt of deeth & departynge oute of this worlde, askynge hem & exhortynge & enformynge & praienge for hem as it is above saide, namly [especially] when they that be in dyenge wolde not or hopen not to dye yhit, and so the syke mennes

soules stonden in gret perel.”⁴⁵ Nonetheless, as in *Visitation E*, the *Craft of Dying*, otherwise carefully orthodox, offers its nonpriestly readers autonomy at the most crucial moment of their spiritual lives, teaching them how to make a good death in the absence of the professional technocrat of death, the priest.

How is the reader, preparing to perform either the function of deathbed attendant or to die her- or himself, to understand both the spiritual logistics involved in making a good death and, above all, the chances of doing so successfully? Remembering the promise of “confortynge” as well as “techyng” in the work’s preface, the first two chapters of the *Craft of Dying* give grounds for optimism, appearing to present an unusually generous salvation theology by assuring readers that a contrite heart at death—even, it seems, in the absence of the sacraments of confession and extreme unction—can make the most habitual sinner acceptable in the eyes of God. Although Aristotle “in the thryd book of Etykes” is right to assert that “bodily deeth” is “moost dreedful of alle ferful thynges,” and David to make the more nuanced reflection that “the deeth of synful men is worst of alle dethes,” it remains true that even “the deeth of ... synful men, how longe and hou wycked and hou cursed they have ben al her lyf before into her last ende ... is acceptable and precieuse in the sight of God,” always provided that “they dye in the state of verray repentaunce and contricyon, and in the verray fayth & unite & charite of Holy Chirche.”⁴⁶ Properly considered, death is to be welcomed, not feared, and almost all of [chapter 1](#) is dedicated to making this point as clear and thorough as possible.

Again, if despair threatens, the dying person is encouraged in [chapter 2](#) to reflect that:

Though eny oo man or womman had y-doo [committed] as many theftes and manslaughtres, or as many other synnes as be dropes of water in the see & gravel-stones in the stronde [shore], though he had nevere do penaunce for hem afore, ne nevere hadde be shryven of hem before, neither than myght have no tyme for syknesse, or lacke of speche or shortnesse of tyme to be shryve of hem, yhit shuld he nevere dyspeyre, for in such a caas verray contricyon of herte wiþyn, wiþ wyl to be shryve yf tyme suffised, is sufficyent & accepted to God forto save him with everlastyngly, as the prophete wytnesseth in the psalm: *Cor contritum & humiliatum Deum non despicies* (Psalm 50:19). Lord God, thou wilt nevere despise a contrite & a meke hert.⁴⁷

A single, inner movement of “verray contricyon,” hidden from bystanders, known only to God, can outweigh decades of sin, negligence of confession, and a speedy death. In this theological world, Suso’s dying youth had every chance to be saved, had he only

not succumbed to despair.

Such words of comfort give some support to the notion that death, truly considered, is not the “moost dreedful” thing it is for Aristotle. Yet in order to avail oneself of the divine mercy, one *must* die well, patient, contrite, and thus in some sense reasonable, and this is exceedingly hard to do without long preparation. The “gret clerke Dons [Scotus]” affirms in his commentary on Lombard’s *Sentences* that those who “consentith fully” to their death, as though they had “chose ... the peyne of deeth voluntarily, & so suffrieth deth paciently,” purge their venial sins and do partial “satisfaccyon” for their mortal ones.⁴⁸ But the *Craft of Dying* fervently insists that a virtuous response to death such as this is “seldom seyen” in practice, among “eny seculer or carnal man or religiouse,” drawing the circle of the saved tight around the community who, by availing themselves of the work’s instructions, are the principal exceptions to this rule. The work allows for situations in which readers officiate as attendants at the death of the great, unprepared majority, suggesting emergency measures that include, as we saw, the arousal of “holsom fere and drede”; although it begins by instructing the dying, [chapter 5](#) soon shifts to the deathbed attendants, faced with various levels of preparation and state of soul. No doubt basic death texts like the *Visitation*, or even the plain Sarum rite, produce “verray contricyon” in some who undergo it; for all its focus on personal preparation, the *Craft of Dying* is not exactly an exclusivist text. Nonetheless, the spiritual prospects of the underprepared are most uncertain and the work’s regular and self-advertising laments that this is an area of perilous ignorance in the church do not point to confidence in the efficacy of existing texts and practices.

Strikingly, indeed, even those who do prepare for their deaths by studying the *Craft of Dying* are not necessarily in a position to find the spiritual assurance the work seems to promise, for the spiritual deportment it is necessary to bring to one’s dying is complex and hard to assess. On the one hand, the need to maintain rational control of the will and show confidence in God’s mercy means that fear of death is not only unnecessary but damaging. The work invokes Jerome and Gregory to argue that it is “open & certeyne” that those who die “ympacyent and grucching ... lacken verray charite”—failing to heed Luke’s direction, “in your pacience ye shul possesse your soules (Luke 21:19)” or realize that “as by pacience mannys soule is seurlly hadde & kepte, so by ympacience and murmuracyon it is lost & dampned.”⁴⁹ Fear and resistance are to be kept at bay.

On the other hand, the need to achieve authentic repentance—in the face of the words of “Seynt Gregory,” that “a man hath selde verrey contricyon,” or of “Seynt Austen,” who notes how many repent only

“to the semyngge outward”⁵⁰—requires the dying person not only to prepare carefully but to be watchful, even at the hour of death, lest “verry contricyon” degrade into its mere “owtward” simulacrum. “[C]omplacence ... that is spirituel pryde,” a sin that especially afflicts “religiouse, and devoute & parfyt men,” is just as damnable as impatience and fear.⁵¹ Even in the last hour, the well-prepared dying person is thus obliged to cultivate a new kind of fear, fear of spiritual inauthenticity, while still steering the difficult course between the Scylla of presumption and the Charybdis of despair that characterizes the ascetic Christian life: “[H]e that shal dye must be war whan he felith himself tempted with pryde ... that he woot nevere [never be sure] whether he be worthy everlastyng love or hate, that is to say, salvacyon or dampnacyon. Nevertheles, lest he dispeyre, he muste lyfte up his hert to God by hope, thenkyng & revolvynge stably that the mercy of God is above alle his workes (Psalm 144:9).”⁵² “Thenkyng” on the divine mercy, the dying person is here close to the self-abandonment to Christ and his saving passion at the core of the Anselm questions, and indeed is later instructed to make this gesture: “putte al thy trust in his passion & in hys deth only ... in thys deeth wrappe al thyself fully.”⁵³ But just as it places small weight on the sacraments, so the *Craft of Dying* places little reliance on Christ’s death unless “verry contricyon” and “verray charite” keep open the door to its saving benefits. As a result, the treatise is shot through with worry about its readers’ ability to manage their own or each others’ deaths and ensure the salvation of souls.

It is worth noticing that much of the anxiety generated by the *Craft of Dying* concerns not the reader’s salvation as such but the *surety* of salvation—the desire of the dying person to achieve what [chapter 3](#) calls “an evident argument ynow of the helthe of his soule that, and he dye soo, he shal be of the nombre of hem that shal be saved.”⁵⁴ In one sense it is thus simply replicating a standard goal of the converted religious life, one that necessarily entails the careful spiritual self-management it outlines in [chapter 2](#) and elsewhere. The work is none the less remarkable in pushing as hard as it does in opposed directions: away from the reliance on the sacraments that structures most medieval death practice in favor of a quasi-monastic form of spiritual praxis; and away from the standard distinctions between lay and religious—in Hilton’s terms, between those reformed in faith alone and those reformed in faith and feeling—in favor of a single approach to the deathbed in which religious perfectionism provides the standard for everyone.

Given the interest in lay forms of asceticism of books such as Douce 322 in which the *Craft of Dying* circulated, this spiritually ambitious work's prominence among the late fifteenth-century London laity does not come as a surprise. Initially more surprising, perhaps, in light of the mix of isolationism and spiritual confidence associated with the lay asceticism of a Baron or a Hoccleve, is the strong note of soteriological anxiety or scrupulosity that sounds in the work: apparently a by-product of the combination of its distinctively interiorized and antiformalist salvation theology and of the breadth of its audience ambitions. A counterpoint to the individualized confidence of London's lay ascetics but also to the communitarian confidence embodied in *The Dance of Death*, with its implied promise of salvation to the morally diligent of all social estates, this note of unease is something we will hear many more times in the rest of this study.

This is not the place for a detailed account of the institutional and theological roots of the piety and death praxis of the *Craft of Dying*.⁵⁵ But it is important to attempt a sketch. The work provided a conduit between pre-Reformation Londoners and two bodies of early fifteenth-century reformist thought, one associated with Paris, the other with Constance and probably Vienna, which strongly influenced the international religious scene into the sixteenth century. Not only did it participate in the devotional internationalization of the elite London laity, as I have suggested, it also prepared the way for the better-known imports from Continental Europe, Erasmian humanism and Lutheranism, which helped bring about the theological revisions of death discourse associated with the first half of the sixteenth century. What is more, an account of how the work's source, the *Tractatus de arte moriendi*, builds on its own source, the *Opusculum tripartitum*, opening up fissures within the pastoral assumptions of early fifteenth-century orthodox reform, offers a suggestive explanation for the theological anxieties and inconsistencies *The Craft of Dying* passes on to readers. Before we return to the London networks within which the work circulated, it will thus be useful to look at the materials from which it was built, beginning with the relation of the *Tractatus* to Gerson's *Opusculum tripartitum*.

Some four times as long as the *De scientia mortis* portion of the *Opusculum tripartitum*, the *Tractatus* incorporates most of Gerson's short work, expanding and rewriting as it goes. Part of its prologue, for example, absorbs the end of Gerson's own prologue, from whose language it derives both its account of itself as a "brief exhortation" and its celebrated title, *de arte moriendi*. Here, I quote the *Tractatus*

and *Opusculum* in Latin, italicizing the passages the two have in common, before providing the equivalent passage in *The Craft of Dying*:

[*Tractatus*] Id circo in presenti materia que de arte moriendi est sequens *brevis exortationis modus est circa eos maxime qui in mortis articulo constituti* mentis intuitu & subtili consideratione notandus seu perpendendus: eo quod modus iste *generaliter omnibus catholicis ad artem & noticiam bene moriendi conquirendam plurimum valere et prodesse potest.*

[*Opusculum*] Quamamobrem cura fuit presenti scripto componere *breuem* quedam *exhortacionis modum* habendum *circa eos que sunt in mortis articulo constituti, valentem etiam generaliter omnibus catholicis ad artem et noticiam bene moriendi conquirendam.*

[*Craft of Dying*] Therefore in thys present matere and tretys, that is of the Crafte of Dyenge, is drawe and conteyned *a short manere of exhortacyon* for techynge & confortynge of hem that ben in poynt of deeth. Thys manere of exhortacyon ought sotelly to be consydred, noted and understonde in the insyght of mannes sowle, for douteles it is and may be profitable *generaly to alle trewe Cristen men to lerne and have the crafte & knoulache to deye wel.*⁵⁶

Besides these borrowings and some structural parallels, the *Tractatus* refers to Gerson directly, noting that its second set of interrogations are written “secundum cancellarium parisiensi,” or in *Craft of Dying* “after þe doctryne of the noble clerke the Chanceler of Paryse.”⁵⁷ As Mary Catherine O’Connor argues, this reference suggests that the *Tractatus* author was aware of the promotion of Gerson’s *Opusculum* by the French nation at the Council of Constance and sought to build both on the new work’s pastoral innovativeness and on its burgeoning reputation.⁵⁸

First written, it is now thought, in Latin but soon translated into French, the *Opusculum* is an important example of the lifelong engagement with the issue of lay instruction, at a practical and theoretical level, on the part of early fifteenth-century Europe’s most famous public religious intellectual.⁵⁹ More than just “Chanceler of Paryse,” Gerson was also adviser to princes, a maker of popes and burner of heretics, and a renowned international preacher, devotional writer, academic theologian, and conciliarist, whose writings at once exemplify and helped to precipitate the turn from theological and social radicalism characteristic of early fifteenth-century thought.⁶⁰ Rocked by the Schism, by the revolutionary writing of John Wyclif, and by the violence of his Hussite Bohemian followers, the early fifteenth-century church establishment embraced a moderate and stable form of piety grounded in Scripture, patristic authority, and ecclesiastical and political order. In many respects a deeply hierarchical thinker—much influenced, like many of his European and

English contemporaries, by pseudo-Dionysius's *Ecclesiastical Hierarchies*—Gerson became the most important theorist of, and apologist for, this piety, with its distinctive emphasis on the systematization of practical instruction within the secular church. As David Luscombe paraphrases Gerson's *De auferabilitate sponsi ab ecclesia*, written a few years before Constance: "In the church the prelates and curates have been set over men to hierarchise them or purge, illumine and perfect them. There should be no resistance to these dispositions. Lucifer was punished for wishing to transgress his own order or hierarchy; Adam was expelled from his terrestrial paradise for the same reason."⁶¹ Even the pope was bound by the hierarchic principle and could not legitimately make dispositions that flouted it.

Hierarchy, for Gerson, has a distinctively conciliar twist, giving special authority to prelates, ministers, and anyone else who has governance over others, while seeking to limit the power not only of the papacy but also, less expectedly, of professional religious. At Constance, he defended the Sisters and Brothers of the Common Life from a heresy charge by the Dominican friar Matthew of Grabow (d. after 1421), who claimed that only those who have taken vows within one of the established religious orders should be allowed to live communally in poverty and chastity. In response, Gerson argued a position analogous to Wyclif's, that since Christ, his mother, and the apostles and saints of the early church took no vows, vows could not be understood as essential to spiritual perfection.⁶² In a 1409 Paris sermon against Alexander V's Bull, *Regnans in excelsis*, and again in *De potestate ecclesiastica*, presented at Constance in 1417, he identified monks as members, with the laity, of the lowest hierarchy of the church, drawing an ecclesiological parallel between lay and enclosed religious analogous to the contemporary *rapprochement* of the devotional practices of the two orders, not least in Gerson's own writings.⁶³ Throughout his career, he worked to promote the cult of St. Joseph, which conceptualized male lay religiosity as an impressive spiritual identity. Neither disciple nor visionary, the newly renovated figure of Joseph (patriarch, craftsman, and wise old man, planning for his family as he prepares for his coming end) was intended to validate the secular majority of the church community, symbolically elevating them to the level of religious.⁶⁴

However, if Gerson's understanding of hierarchy was distinctive in its emphasis on prelates and curates, not the contemplative orders, it was nonetheless directed at strengthening the church's pastoral mission by way of the reform and revitalization of each level of the existing structure, rather than through its radical reordering along lines advocated by Wyclif and others.

Throughout his long career as a pastoral writer for laymen and

minor clerics, Gerson tirelessly produced texts that allowed Christians in positions of secular or religious authority to exercise their governance over others in spiritually improving ways, and the *Opusculum tripartitum* is a clear case in point. Made up of three brief works, “*De preceptis, de confessione, de scientia mortis*,” as the prologue names its major subdivisions,⁶⁵ and introduced as written by Gerson in his capacity as professor and university chancellor, the work soon gained quasi-official status in both its Latin and its vernacular versions, and remained in vigorous French and German circulation throughout the fifteenth century. A reform document known as “*Avisata*,” containing the minutes of a council held in Paris in 1411, mentions the work as an important and scrupulously orthodox new weapon in the battle against lay and clerical ignorance that is to be published in careful copies throughout the dioceses and archdioceses of France.⁶⁶

As its careful opening list of its intended constituencies suggests, however, the actual remit of the *Opusculum tripartitum* is toward more local institutional settings than the diocese. The work is written for four kinds of people: uneducated priests and curates with a responsibility to hear confessions (“*sacerdotibus et curatis illiteratis atque simplicibus qui confessiones audire debent*”); other unlearned people, “*secularibus aut religiosis*” who cannot for whatever reason attend sermons and thus learn the work’s contents orally; schoolchildren, “*pueris et iuvenibus*,” who should be instructed from infancy; and those who visit or look after the sick in hospitals or elsewhere (“*domos Dei vel hospitalia loca frequentantibus et infirmorum sollicitudinem gerentibus*”).⁶⁷ Its circulation, partly by way of books chained in prominent places and also of what Margaret Aston calls “pastoral placards,” should be urged by prelates in their dioceses, parents in schools, masters in their hospitals, and by all other interested parties, as the greatest act of almsgiving or penitence that anyone can perform.⁶⁸ Parish priests and their parishioners, householders, parents, semireligious, and those carrying out the works of mercy, are thus given the tools to participate in a common instructional program. Like the more elaborate anthologies containing the *Visitation of the Sick* in lay and clerical circulation in early fifteenth-century London, the *Opusculum tripartitum* is adaptable to a variety of audiences and didactic situations but assumes the need for constant edification, outward and downward through all the estates and institutions of society.

Like those anthologies also, the *Opusculum* assumes that one of the key sites of such edification is the deathbed: a site on which the last part of Gerson’s treatise places what in the early 1400s was an unusual degree of attention and where the laity have an especially

important role to play. Unlike the rest of the work, *De scientia mortis* is addressed solely to those who are not priests but neighbors, hospital workers, and others in active life, who undertake to perform their merciful work of sickbed attendance in the interstices of the regular rites and sacraments for the dying. In roughly the same way as *Visitation* E, Gerson elaborates a paraliturgical deathbed praxis for these attendants by reframing elements of the standard ritual as versions of the charitable impulse, enjoined upon all, to help a friend in need: “In hac enim extrema mortis necessitate fidelis probatur amicus.; quippe nullum est opus misericordie maius siue commodosius” (in this utter necessity of death a faithful friendship is proved. Also there is no greater nor more advantageous a work of mercy). There are exhortations and interrogations to be said by those at the bedside; prayers to be said by the dying person, or on her or his behalf; and a set of observations about the conduct of the deathbed, importantly including the need to determine the dying person’s sacramental readiness: “Si patiens nondum eucharistiam aut extremam unctionem susceperit, interrogetur an eadem sacramenta devote paratus est recipere” (if the patient has not yet received communion or extreme unction, he should be asked if he is prepared to receive these same sacraments devoutly).⁶⁹ All these features of the work are later taken up, in much expanded form, to structure the *Tractatus*, which indeed seems to offer an intense response to the novel focus on deathbed attendants central to the *De scientia mortis*.

Like the *Opusculum*, which is aimed in principle at “the salvation of faithful souls” (“ad salutem fidelium animarum”) and at “all Christian people” (“omni Christiani”),⁷⁰ the *Tractatus* is written for “all Catholics” (“omnibus catholicis”) and takes its responsibilities to this general audience seriously. But while the *Opusculum* cannot exactly be said to make good on Gerson’s equation between the laity and monks—the *De scientia mortis* is especially tilted toward the former—the *Tractatus* begins by assuming just this equation, directing itself “not only to laypeople but also to professional religious and to devout persons” (“non solum laicis verum etiam religiosis atque deuotis”), and sometimes gesturing specifically at audiences of religious. No longer a voluntary and meritorious work of spiritual *amicitia* but a solemn duty,⁷¹ deathbed attendance effectively becomes a professional obligation, as the *Tractatus* appears to move away from the parochial setting of the *Opusculum* toward the small group communities the work describes as “conventa” (“covent,” in *The Craft of Dying*). As my account of *The Craft of Dying* in the previous section will already have suggested, from the length and complexity of the various aspects of the rite to the ambitions and anxieties it assumes and cultivates in

participants, to its elevated understanding of its own importance as an instrument of salvation, the resulting work differs in profound ways from the text on which it builds and whose general program it imitates.

The unusual direction taken by the work as it builds its address *from lay to religious* (“non solum laicis *verum etiam* religiosis”), not vice versa, adding greatly to the responsibilities and demands Gerson assigns the laity in the process, inflects every chapter of the *Tractatus*. In [chapter 4](#) and [5](#), for example, the attendants are not only given specific tasks such as reading, comfort, exhortation, display of images of the saints and the cross, and sprinkling of holy water, but are expected to make their own judgments as to the state of the dying person’s soul and to respond accordingly, comforting or chastizing as need as though exercising the *cura pastoralis*.⁷² The sophistication required in making these judgments—or in successfully dying well within the spiritual system they embody—gives force to the work’s opening statement that this ars, unlike Gerson’s simpler one, needs to be carefully and thoroughly thought through in advance (“mentis intuiti et subtili consideratione notandus seu perpendendus”), so that the laity devote themselves to learning to die in the same way as monks.⁷³

The clearest example of the particular priorities of the *Tractatus*, however, and of its sense of the spiritual complexity of the deathbed from the viewpoint of both the attendants and the dying person is the second set of interrogations in the work’s [chapter 3](#): a supplement to the Anselm questions aimed at both secular and religious (“siue seculares siue regulares”) but calibrated, as the questions in this case are not, toward those living in the world.⁷⁴ These interrogations are described as having been written “secundum cancellarium parisiensi” in order to discover more clearly the spiritual state and prospects of the dying (“de suo statu et salute in agone certius atque clarius inquiri et informari”).⁷⁵ But this description is misleading. Gerson nowhere describes his questions as “examinations” designed to reveal the dying person’s inner soul, their declared function here. Moreover, key parts of the *Tractatus* interrogations themselves have nothing to do with the *Opusculum*, but mark the perfectionist concern with inner veracity, as well as a related concern with religious orthodoxy, specific to the new work. Rather than point up a parallel between the works, the reference to the *Opusculum* here quietly emphasizes their differences.

The *Opusculum* asks six questions: (1) Do you desire to die as a Christian before God and Christ and in obedience to the church? (2) Do you seek God’s pardon for sins done against him and your failure to honor him as you should? (3) Do you mean to do better if you should live and ask God to continue in you the grace of true

contrition? (4) Are you aware of any mortal sin you have not confessed, and ask God to bring into your heart any sin you have forgotten in order to confess it? (5) Do you forgive in your heart all who have done you harm in reverence and love of Jesus Christ for whom you hope for the same forgiveness and do you seek the same forgiveness of others? (6) Do you mean to restore whatever you have failed to restore, up to the value of all your goods, and ask God and man pardon for any residue? ⁷⁶ Although related to the Anselm questions, these questions have a lay emphasis, recognizing that at the lay deathbed mortal sins may go unconfessed or forgotten, debts be unpaid, relationships with others be unresolved.

Recognizing the need for settlement of debts, the *Tractatus* largely preserves the final two questions, in which the focus on the laity is most obvious, adding a seventh interrogation that asks the dying to recognize that Christ died for them and that their salvation depends on the merits of his passion alone (“Credis quod pro te mortuus sit christus et quod alii saluari non potes nisi per meritum passionis domini nostri iesu christi?”).⁷⁷ But it greatly extends the other questions in two directions. First, it deepens the *Opusculum*’s investigation of sin. The Gerson questions on sin are introduced by a new interrogation, carefully translated in the *Craft of Dying*, with no parallel in the *Opusculum*:

Secundo queratur sic: Cognoscis te creatorem tuum sepe et multipliciter atque grauiter offendisse? Nam per beatus bernardum in canticis sic dicitur. Scio neminem absque sui cognitione saluari. De qua nimirum vera salus oritur et timor domini, quia et sicut initium est sapientie ita et salutis.⁷⁸

The seconde interrogacyon shal be thys: “Knoulechist thou that often tymes & in many maner wyse & greuously thou hast offendyd thy lord God ... ? For Seynt Bernard seth thus upon *Cantica Canticorum*: ‘I knowe wel that ther may noo man be saved but yf he knowe himself: of the whiche knowynge waxith ... the drede of God, the whiche drede, as it is the begynnynge of wisdom, so it is the begynnynge of helthe of mannes soule.’”⁷⁹

The dying person is thus asked not simply for contrition over individual sins but for an ascetic self-knowledge based on the general consciousness of sin that some English readers of the *Craft of Dying* found articulated in poetic form in *Pety Job*. Moreover, such self-knowledge and the “begynnynge of wisdom” to which it leads is here understood as a precondition of salvation.

The three Gerson questions on sin are then reordered, recombined, and rewritten to a similar end. The third interrogation works outward from Gerson’s second question while combining it with part of his fourth, while the fourth interrogation extends and revises Gerson’s third question. In what follows, passages in the *Tractatus* with no

equivalent in the *Opusculum* are given in italics:

Tercio: *doles ex toto corde* de omnibus peccatis contra dei maiestatem amorem atque benignitatem, de malis commissis et de bonis omissis, [= *Opusculum* question 2]⁸⁰ *et gracijs neglectis: non solum timore mortis conturbatur vel pene cuiusque sed magis ex amore dei et iusticie et caritate qua tenemur deum super omnia diligere? Et petis frater omnibus istis veniam, optans insuper cor tu si illuminari ad cognitionem oblatorum, vt de illis valeas specialiter penitere?* [= *Opusculum* question 4b]⁸¹

Quarto: *proponis te veraciter velle emendari si superuiuere debueris, et nunquam plus mortaliter te peccare scienter et proposito de liberator, set potius omni quantumcunque eara dimittere immo eciam vitam carnalem perdere antequa, deus plus velles offendere?* Rogas insuper dei vt det tibi gratiam hoc propositum continuandi et non recidiuandi? [= *Opusculum* question 3]⁸²

In the *Craft of Dying*, the *Tractatus* passages are rendered as follows:

The thrydde interrogacyon shall be thys: “*Art thou sory in thyn herte of al maner of synnes that thou hast do ayenst the hye maijste, and the love & the goodnesse of God, and of alle þe goodnesse that thou hast not and myghtist have doo, [= Opusculum question 2] and of alle graces that thou hast forslothed, not only for drede of deth or eny other payne bot rather moor for love of God & ryghtwesnes, and for thou hast displesed hys gret goodnesse and kyndenesse, and for the dewe ordre of charite by the whiche we be bounden to love God above alle thynges; and of al þese þinges thou askist foryefnes of God? Desirest thou also in thyn hert to have verray knowynge of alle the offenses that thou hast doo ayenst God and foryete, to have special repentaunce of hem alle?*” [= *Opusculum* question 4b]

The fourthe interrogacyon shal be thys: “*Purposist thu verrily & art in ful wyl to amende the and thou mightist lyve lenger, and nevere to synne moor deedly, wityngly & wiþ thy wille, and, rather than thou woldest offende God deedly eny moor, to leve & lese wilfully alle erthely þynges, were thei nevere so leef to the, and also the lyf of thy body therto? And firþermoor, þu praienst God to yeve the grace to contynue in þis purpose?* [= *Opusculum* question 3]⁸³

Insisting on heartfelt contrition (“*doles ex toto corde*”) rather than the more formal contrition requested by the *Opusculum* (“*Petis a deo veniam*”), the third interrogation omits Gerson’s reference to unconfessed mortal sin (“*Es tu conscius tibi ipsi alicuius peccati mortalis criminis de quo non sis confessus?*”),⁸⁴ perhaps inconceivable in this devout environment. It also requires that contrition be based on timor filialis, not timor servilis, demanding that the dying person put aside fear and love God “*super omnia.*” With similar spiritual absolutism, the fourth interrogation asks for a conversion of the self so deep that the sick would rather suffer like Job or die the death of a martyr than sin again, should they survive their illness. There is plenty of opportunity for these questions to elicit spiritual anxiety in those

not prepared for them. Indeed, while proper answers to them, if given with good conscience and unfeigned truth (“ex conscientia bona et fide non ficta”), constitute a clear argument that the dying will be found among the saved (“satis evidens argumentum salutis habet ... quod de numero saluandorum erit”), the work anticipates that many will answer unconvincingly and require yet further moral probing.⁸⁵

Less expectedly, the work not only probes the dying person’s spiritual disposition but also her or his orthodoxy, in the process extending and rewriting the first of Gerson’s questions. Here I quote first the *Opusculum tripartitum*, then the Latin of the *Tractatus*, again using italics to designate passages added in the latter, followed by the rendering of the *Tractatus* passage in the *Craft of Dying*:

Opusculum. Dilecte aut dilecta, vis tu mori et viuere in soliditate fidei cristiane respectu dei et domini nostri jhesu Christi tanquam verus, fidelis et obediens sancte matris Ecclesie filius?

Tractatus. *Credis omnes principales articulos fidei. Et insuper toti sacre scripture per omnia secundum sanctorum catholicorum atque orthodoxorum sancte ecclesie doctorum expositionem: et detestaris omnes hereses et errores atque superstitiones ab ecclesia reprobatas ac letaris insuper quod in fide christi ac vnitate matris ecclesie ac obedientia morieris.*⁸⁶

Craft of Dying. “Bilevest thou fully alle the principal articles of þe feyth, & also al Holy Scripture in alle thynges after the exposicyon of the holy & trewe doctours of Holi Chirche, and forsakist alle heresyys and errours & oppinyons dampned by the Chirche, and art glad also that thou shalt dye in the feyth of Cryst and in þe unyte and obedience of Holi Chirche?”⁸⁷

This interrogation, which gives a careful account of the beliefs implied in Gerson’s phrase “in soliditate fidei cristiane” and an equally careful one of those implied by “fidelis ... ecclesie filius,” is further clarified by a passage about the virtue of faith given earlier, in [chapter 2](#):

Bonus autem christianus non solum principales fidei articulos verum etiam toti sacre scripture in omnibus et per omnia tenetur credere ad minus implicite sancteque romane ecclesie statutis subiectus esse et in his firmiter permanere atque mori. Alioquin quod cito in aliquo premissorum errare incipit, tam cito deuiata via vite et salutis.

Every good Cristen man is bounden namely habitually, though he may not actually and intellectually apprehende hem, to byleve, and ful feyth & credence yeve, not oonly to the principal articles of the feyth but also to alle Holy Wryt in al manere of thinges, and fully to obeye the statutes of the Chirche of Rome, and stably to abyde & dye in hem, for also sone as he begynneth to erre or doute in eny of hem alle, as sone he goth oute of the way of lyf & his soule hele.⁸⁸

Even with respect to those with limited knowledge of theology, the demands the interrogations make on the dying person's virtue, readiness, and self-awareness are thus matched by equally specific demands on her or his true belief: adherence not only to the articles of the faith but to orthodox biblical exegesis and even canon law, as well as a specific inner gesture of repudiation of anything the "Chirche of Rome" has condemned, is necessary for those who would be saved. Once again, the emphasis on the spiritual danger of even minor error or doubt here is thoroughly conducive to the anxiety that characterizes the entire text, and which, here as elsewhere, is the specific contribution of the *Tractatus* author, not a feature of the *Opusculum tripartitum*.

If the *Tractatus* was indeed a product, in some sense, of the Council of Constance and, as seems likely, written within a few years of the *Opusculum* in an environment suffused by Gerson's influence, it is initially hard to know what to make of the significant differences between the two works' attitudes to dying well. Clearly, the works' differently constituted audiences are a major factor here, but not, I think, a sufficient one: the *Tractatus* audience overlaps with, indeed subsumes, that of the *Opusculum*, the new demands in the *Tractatus* are made of everyone, and the *Tractatus* is loud in its acknowledgment of debt to the *Opusculum*. The disparities between the works are still more interesting if, as seems likely, the *Tractatus* was written by a university master in theology thoroughly familiar with Gerson and his writings. Many Latin and German copies of the *Tractatus* ascribe the work to Nikolaus von Dinkelsbühl (d. 1433), secular theologian, rector of the University of Vienna in 1405–6, and prolific writer of pastoralia.⁸⁹ Although English-language scholarship tends to follow O'Connor in assigning the *Tractatus* to a Dominican, Rainer Rudolph proposed von Dinkelsbühl's authorship in his study of the *ars moriendi* in the 1950s.⁹⁰ Von Dinkelsbühl was at Constance as a close supporter of Gerson, who had a deep influence on the refocusing of theological teaching in early fifteenth-century Vienna away from the speculative toward the affective and practical.⁹¹ More than thirty copies of the Latin *Tractatus* are from Vienna.⁹² If von Dinkelsbühl did write the *Tractatus*, the work's differences from the *Opusculum* beg for a specific explanation.

One part of this explanation must, I suggest, have to do with the anxieties associated with a specific heresy in the ambit of Constance and early fifteenth-century Vienna, Hussitism. While the reformist energies unleashed at Constance have been recently reemphasized in relation to England by Vincent Gillespie and Jeremy Catto, the council devoted almost equal energy to suppressing reform.⁹³ Many conciliar

theologians, including Gerson, attacked Hussitism and Wycliffism in their writings, while two prominent Hussite theologians, Jerome of Prague and Jan Hus himself, were burned at Constance: a shocking development, given the academic level at which the theological questions at issue were discussed, one that Nicholas Watson has suggested found an echo in London, in the 1415 burning of the skinner John Claydon for adhering to the teachings of *The Lanterne of Light*.⁹⁴ Von Dinkelsbühl played a significant role in the persecution of the Hussites of Lower Austria, accusing and trying Jerome as dean of the Vienna theology faculty in 1409 and playing a leading role at Constance, as a representative of the Hapsburg duke, Albrecht V, in Jerome's retrial and condemnation. The fervor and detail with which the dying person needs to submit to the "catholic" church and its interpretation of the Scriptures in the interrogations and to be subject to the statutes of the "sanctaeque romane ecclesie" in fighting doubt with faith points to the origins of the *Tractatus* in an activist program of orthodox reform for which Hussitism and its ancestor, Wycliffism, were the main enemies and in which the interpretation of Scripture and the status of canon law were critical issues. Since Eucharistic theology was another such issue, the work's tendency to downplay discussion of the sacraments, an area of particular conceptual complexity, may point in a similar direction.

Another part of the explanation for the distinctiveness of the *Tractatus* may have to do with the close relationship created by the Hussite threat between the conciliar program to reform Christian society as a whole and the monastic reform movement in particular. By the early 1400s, the turn toward strict observance of monastic rules known as the Observant Reform, which began in the 1330s among Franciscans in Italy, had been taken up by the Augustinians, the Dominicans, and, at last, the Benedictines. Although a secular academic, known for his pastoral writings, von Dinkelsbühl took a leading part in the Austrian version of this process, which was backed by local rulers as well as the church and, in its powerful awareness of the threat of heresy, had strong authoritarian undertones.⁹⁵ In 1415, the year of Hus's execution, again working for Albrecht V, von Dinkelsbühl wrote a *Reformationis methodus* that set ground rules for reform at the ancient abbey of Melk and other houses, including what became Luther's Augustinian monastery at Wittenberg.⁹⁶ His interest in the combination of the communitarian and the ascetic with the individualistic and the devout that characterized observant monasticism also inflects his pastoral writings for the laity, written for readerships comparable to the Londoners who read the *Craft of Dying*. Translated into German, von Dinkelsbühl's sermon cycles, catechetical expositions, and moral treatises were widely read on both sides of the

cloister wall throughout the fifteenth century, alongside other works of the Viennese “new piety,” such as Thomas Peutner’s *Büchlein von der Liebhabung Gottes* as well as the *Tractatus de arte bene moriendi* itself.⁹⁷

Von Dinkelsbühl’s interest in the joint project of reforming monks and laity, informed by Gersonian conciliarism, spurred on by the struggle against heresy, and responsive to national as well as ecclesiastical interests, offers a rich context for the writing of the *Tractatus*. In the work’s laments that there are so few “non solum apud seculares verum etiam in pluribus religionibus” (“not only among seculars but also in dyverse religious”) who know the art of dying,⁹⁸ we encounter a religious milieu as dissatisfied with the state of monasticism as of the laity and concerned to reform both groups in tandem, following Gerson’s account of the two as ecclesiological equals and the conciliar movement’s wider concern to buttress the power of the secular church. The work is clearly written with religious partly in mind, addressing them explicitly and often critically in several places and using the monastic “conventum” as a template throughout, even as it often reverts to a lay address.

Chapter 5, for example, begins by complaining of religious that “rarissime eciam aliqui inter religiosos et deuotos se ad mortem disponunt tempestiue vt oportet” (“right selde eny man, yhe amonge religiouse & deuote men, disposen hemself to deeth by tyme as he ought”), before moving to consider the secular situation in which people thus die “intestatis ... improuisi ... indispositi” (“untestat ... unavysed ... undisposed”). It also notices the preparations the dying need to make in “sacramenta ... ecclesiastica deuote recipiendo, testamentum ordinando domum suam atque negocia alia si qua habet legitime disponendo” (“takyng the sacraments of Holy Chirche, ordeynynge & makynge his testament, & laufully disposynge for hys householde & other nedes, yf he have eny to dispose fore”), again alluding to arrangements suggestive of the lay dying.⁹⁹ Alluding several times to the city as well as the “conventum”—once in Amos’s grim words “*Non est malum in ciuitate quod Dominus non fecit*” (“There is noon euel in the cyte bot God do it” [Amos 3:8])¹⁰⁰—the chapter comes to a climax in a remarkable evocation of devout Christians running to assist at the deathbed of a colleague in which the two loci are intertwined:

Nulli ergo incongruum vel mirum videatur de tam solerti cura et sollicita dispositione ac studiosa exhortatione ipsis morientibus vt premittitur exhibenda; quia nimirum tanta talisque vis et necessitas ipsis est inclita ac incumbit: vt si possibile esset tota ciuitas ad morientem in orationibus conuenire deberet festinanter, sicut in quibusdam religionibus extat, vbi statuitur quod quando infirmus morti appropinquat tunc tabula pulietur vt mox audita tabula quacumque hora omnes fratres vbicumque fuerint,

dimissis omnibus occupationibus, occurrant quam cicius possunt morienti.
Unde et dicitur quod religiosi et mulieres propter sui status honestatem
currere non debent nisi ad morientem vel ad ignem.

But lat no man wondre ne thenke that it is inconvenyent that so gret charge
and diligence ... shold be had & mynistred to hem that ben in poynt of deth
... for thei be in such perel & in so gret nede at that tyme that, & it were
possible, all a cite shuld come togydre with al haste to a man that is in
dienge, as the manere is in som religions, in whiche it is ordeyned that
whan a syke man is ny þe deth than every of the brother shal, whan they
heren the table y-smyte, what houre that evere it be & wher that evere they
be, alle þinges y-lefte, hastily come to hym that is in dyenge. And therfore
it is rad that religious people & wemmen, for the honeste of her astate,
shuld not renne bot to a man that is in dyenge & for fyre.¹⁰¹

Here the city becomes a monastery at the same time as the monastery becomes a city, while the dying person is like a fire, which threatens both. In its brief forgetting of any distinction between monastic and lay dying but also in the urgency of its equation of the deathbed with a city on fire, this image is most suggestive, not only of the theological priorities of a particular version of conciliar reform but also of the urgency the *Tractatus* assigns to the deathbed in the fight against the disintegration of Christian community threatened by general moral laxity and heresy alike.

The level of anxiety about authenticity, orthodoxy, and salvation itself on display in the *Tractatus*—a work that, despite its promise to offer “comforynge” to those preparing for death, seems mysteriously embattled—also makes sense within the context of a general movement of reform at war with a second general movement of reform, the Hussite. In asking the laity to worry over their eternal destiny with the thoroughness of monks and monks to worry over theirs with the uncertainty of laypeople, the *Tractatus* seeks a new model of ecclesiastical unity, based less on sacramental ritual or social activism than on shared spiritual experience. By shifting attention away from theological politics to an intensely urgent form of personal piety, it also seeks to resituate reform into a safe space within which it can be translated into spiritual anxiety and equated with submission to the Roman Church. The anxiety generated by the *Tractatus* in its fierce focus on self-care, self-scrutiny, and devotional striving is thus not simply a by-product of spiritual perfectionism but desirable in its own right. Scrupulosity in this context is a virtue. Heretical thoughts, newfangled theological concepts, the social reform of Christendom, and other aspects of the theopolitical crisis the Council of Constance associated with Hus and his English Wycliffite equivalents are translated into the subjective arena of the individual sinner’s soul, in which violent efforts at reform and conversion are always appropriate.

In this translation, the *Tractatus* is pursuing an agenda different from the *Opusculum*, but it is still a Gersonian agenda.

The *Craft of Dying* in London

The conciliar reformist backstory for the *Craft of Dying* clarifies a good deal about the work's shape and pastoral disposition and will prove directly relevant to some early sixteenth-century developments in the *ars moriendi* discussed in [Chapter 5](#). Its relevance to the London reception of the *Craft of Dying*, however, is less obvious. The *Tractatus* may have returned to England with one of the delegates to the council, soon after it was written, as O'Connor suggests. Given the perceived threat of Wycliffism in its new, Hussite incarnation and the continuing investment in the movement at Oxford into the early 1400s, the English had much to live down at Constance and took energetic interest in the proceedings at the highest level, as Vincent Gillespie and Jeremy Catto have shown.¹⁰² Still, if it was brought to England to combat heresy at home, it does not seem to have been promoted with much vigor once it arrived. There are few insular Latin copies of the work, most of them late, while the *Craft of Dying* itself, although perhaps produced as early as the 1420s, does not seem to have gained traction until the 1460s.¹⁰³

The work's apparent amplifications of *Tractatus* references to Gerson—"noble clerke the Chancelor of Paryse," "gret clerke the Chaunceler of Parys," for Latin "cancellarium parisiensi"¹⁰⁴—in any case seem unlikely reflections of English attitudes in the direct aftermath of the council, where English and French delegations often clashed. Perhaps these references point us to a different context for later English interest in the work, in the desire to imitate French devotional culture that seemingly lies behind both the *Daunce of Poulys* and Hoccleve's *Series*. In one of its earliest copies, now University of Notre Dame MS 67, made for the important aristocratic book collector John Scrope of Masham (d. 1454), the *Craft of Dying* appears with a devotional rarity: a *Meditationes vitae Christi* version known as *Speculum devotorum*, probably written at Sheen Charterhouse by c. 1420, and full of references to recent visionary writers who were also popular in France: Henry Suso, Bridget of Sweden, Elizabeth of Hungary, and others.¹⁰⁵ The *Craft of Dying* was added to this manuscript some time after *Speculum devotorum*, and by a different scribe, perhaps William Mansfield, Scrope's personal secretary. Given the breadth of Scrope's interests, there is no reason to assume that it, too, was a Sheen production.¹⁰⁶ Nonetheless, even when it was first produced, the translation may not have remembered

its conciliar origin at all.

If the stressful political and pastoral situation from which the *Tractatus* emerged is difficult to connect directly to the environment of late fifteenth- and early sixteenth-century London, however, the *Craft of Dying* still brought its own, unusually anxious brand of pastoral care into this environment, one that, on a local level, had plenty of political and pastoral stresses. While we cannot tell much about how the work affected a figure like Baron, even if we do know that he valued it, we can speculate about its impact on some of his successors, through the study not only of the textual networks that suggest how it traveled and of the nature of its traveling companions but also of the wills of other probable or possible owners, made as a matter of course as their minds turned toward death. Most of what we can gather from such a study is speculative, and the results offer little by way of easy generalization. But they do suggest that exercising the “craft of dying” in the situations in which wealthy lay Londoners often found themselves was, to say the least, complicated, requiring every bit of the forethought the *Craft of Dying* insists on and still often allaying neither the spiritual nor the worldly anxieties endemic to the occasion. Whether or not it altered the subjective experience of dying, the laicization of the deathbed tracked through the course of this book came with a significant price.

Two striking features of the majority of the twelve *Craft of Dying* manuscripts are the patterns of repetitions within their contents, especially with more closely adjacent works, and the tendency of owners to inscribe their names in copies, making it possible to track, at least provisionally, both textual and social relationships.. Most of these manuscripts belong to one of two London area networks. The first, related to Baron’s book, Douce 322, its ownership by his granddaughter, the Dartford Dominican nun Parnel Wrattisley, and its copy, Harley 1706, is the subject of a classic article by A. I. Doyle. Also including two other Dominican copies, one bound with materials perhaps copied by a nun of Barking, this network revolves around Elizabeth De Vere, Countess of Oxford (d. 1527), a niece of John Scrope of Masham, who had close ties to Dartford and Barking, and whose signature is in Harley, suggesting both the close ties between London area convents and aristocratic women and the free way within which the *Craft of Dying* could move, in practice as in theory, between monastic and devout lay environments.¹⁰⁷

The second network, lay, London, and mostly masculine, begins with two books, both likely made near the end of the fifteenth century and both of which contain signatures of a certain William Harlowe. One is Oxford, Bodleian Library Rawlinson MS C.894, in which we

find a second owner name and a date, “Edmond Roberts anno 1553.” The other, which seems to have been Rawlinson’s exemplar, is London, British Library Royal MS 17.C.xviii, which likewise includes a second name, “Thoorlay.” Royal 17.C.xviii was copied by the same scribe as a third book, also late fifteenth century, Oxford, Corpus Christi College MS 220, which is signed by John and Isabel Manningham.¹⁰⁸ We return to these figures and what can be known of their biographies shortly.

Royal 17.C.xviii, Rawlinson C.894, and Corpus Christi 220 are textually related to three earlier London books: MS Douce 322, Harley 1706, and Manchester, John Rylands Library English MS 94, with which they share some items other than the *Craft of Dying*.¹⁰⁹ Less closely connected, but with certain shared materials, is Oxford, Bodleian Library MS 423, also an earlier book, the relevant parts of which were copied c. 1450 by the Carthusian Stephen Dodesham, and whose sixteenth-century London circulation, revealed by the presence of four names—“Alin Kyes pewterere of London,” “Master Robert Cuttyng,” “Peter Pynggarnarde, and “Tryvysan”—has recently been studied by Nicole Rice.¹¹⁰

Taken with the evidence these books provide of having been assembled from booklets or deriving from books put together in this way, such affiliations, names, and textual groupings suggest that the work was made available in an organized fashion in later fifteenth- and early sixteenth-century London, and that lay demand for the book, throughout this period, was high. Coming into circulation during the middle decades of the century, as an alternative to the *Visitation of the Sick* and the briefer practical death texts that form part of the *Visitation* group, the *Craft of Dying* held its own against the influx of new *Tractatus*-related translations that began to be printed thirty years later. These comprise William Caxton’s abridged *Art and Craft to Know Well to Die* in 1490 and his much shorter *Craft for to Deye* (*Ars moriendi*) in 1491; a second edition of the longer *Art and Craft* by Richard Pynson in 1495, and a second and third edition of the shorter *Craft for to Deye* (*Ars moriendi*) by Wynkyn de Worde in 1497 and 1506; and two rival English translations of a prestige item, the huge *L’Art de bien vivre et bien mourir*, published by Antoine Vérard in Paris for the English market in 1503 and by Wynkyn de Worde in London in 1505. *L’Art de bien vivre et bien mourir* incorporates Guillaume Tardif’s *Art de bien mourir* for Charles VIII of France, a redaction of the woodcut *ars moriendi* “Quamvis secundum,” which, as we saw, is itself an amplified descendant of [chapter 2](#) of the *Tractatus* on temptations, with materials from other chapters.¹¹¹ Still much the most sophisticated articulation of the *Tractatus* tradition amid all this competition, the *Craft of Dying* clearly offered a widely

used lay supplement to the deathbed liturgy until wholly new death texts emerged in the 1530s, and continued to be in active service after that.¹¹²

Many of these lay London *Craft of Dying* copies also share a further feature, for in five of those I have mentioned—MS Royal 17.C.xviii, MS Rawlinson C.894, MS Corpus Christi 220, MS Douce 322, and MS Rylands English 94—the work occurs with two other major texts as part of a grouping or booklet whose frequent association suggests we should read all three works together. One of these works, *Twelve Profits of Tribulation*, always accompanied by a group of short texts of similar type, was discussed in [Chapter 3](#), and solidifies the association between the *Craft of Dying* and the cultivation of an ascetic lay identity discussed in that chapter. The other work, the *Treatise of Ghostly Battle*, found only in these five London manuscripts and two others,¹¹³ might be read as responding to the arduousness of death preparation described by the *Craft of Dying* by offering a range of useful materials. Solidly dependent on the rhetoric of earlier insular religious thought, and partly drawn from works such as *Pore Caitif*, *Ghostly Battle* begins by describing the disciplines that Christians must undertake in fighting world, flesh, and devil, using the sustained metaphor of an armored knight and his horse to detail the situation within which they find themselves and the balance of virtues they must sustain. But its second half is a meditation on death, judgment, and the next world—topics not covered at all in the *Craft of Dying*—in which the reader is instructed to “sende thyne herte,” first into hell, with a detour toward judgment, then into purgatory, then into heaven, in the manner of the death meditation *Tower of All Towers*, found in Douce 322 and other copies.¹¹⁴ The effect is similar to that in the *L’Art de bien vivre et bien mourir*, where a relatively brief *ars moriendi*, with five contrasting pairs of woodcuts, is flanked by materials on Christian living and accounts of the other world.¹¹⁵ More straightforward than the *Craft of Dying*—willing to promise that those who have “kepte goddys commaundementis and fulfyllde the dedys of mercy and withstande thy enemyes myghtfully” go to heaven—the *Ghostly Battle* is engaged in just the project of rectification its manuscript companion requires, and may have been a prime resource for those seeking to order their lives in preparation for death.¹¹⁶

How else did lay Londoners prepare to use the *Craft of Dying* and what special concerns did it raise for them? As the partly random luck of legible signatures and surviving wills would have it, the lay London manuscript network suggests radically different possible answers to these questions, one of them as decorous and devout as the life of William Baron appears from the public record, the other very different

and much more puzzling, even if in its own way it is still in tune with the unsettled and unsettling character of the work itself.

The decorous answers arise from Royal 17.C xviii and Rawlinson C.894, an exemplar and copy with identical contents that nonetheless seem to have traveled together for the first half century of their existence, as though their circulation were being coordinated over several generations. The man who names himself in both books “William Horlow,” “Harlywes,” or “Wylliam Harlowys” may have been the eldest son of the London citizen and grocer Richard Harlow, whose will, proved in 1505, leaves him with various bequests. Richard Harlow, who asks to be buried with his parents near St. Paul’s Cross but also remembers his parish church, St. Mary Magdalene Milk Street, divides his goods conventionally into three parts, one for his wife, Joanna, one for his children—“William Harlowes” and three siblings, all minors—one for individual bequests, many for charitable causes. Leaving William an elaborate “double cross” of inlaid gold, whose disposition takes up a quarter of the will, he enjoins Joanna to see to the “leernyng and teching” of their children and bequeathes his brother-in-law, “Robert Therie, doctour of divinitie,” a parchment “boke callid the bibull” in return for prayers and further supervision of the children, a topic of recurrent concern. This was a devout as well as a successful man.¹¹⁷

The signature “Thoorlay,” found in Royal 17.C, xviii may be that of Thomas Thorley, a London girdler, whose will was also proved in 1505. Thomas Thorley’s will is that of a less wealthy figure, with no specific moneys for named charities. But it, too, involves moneys for children who are minors; prayers for his soul; a precious devotional object, a “coverlet of ymagery worke of beyonde see making,” given to his parish church, St. Benet’s Gracechurch; and instructions for repayment of debts “by my books named or otherwise.” The will opens with language that, if formulaic, suggests that Thorley also had serious views and consciously prepared for his death: “I Thomas Thorley, ... remembryng that I must nede dye and deperte oute of this worlde and knowe not how nor whan, and willyng, in that in me ys, not departe hense untestat, make my last will, that is to wite: ffirst I geve and comende my soule vnto almighty Jhesu my creator and saviour and to the most glorious virgyn his moder seynt mary and to all seyntyngs in heven.”¹¹⁸ Using the rare “untestat,” which the *Middle English Dictionary* records only from the *Craft of Dying* and one other work,¹¹⁹ Thorley may have died, and helped others do so, with the *Craft of Dying*. We do not know if Richard Harlowe did the same, since the sole connection between the men I know of is through William’s ownership of Thorley’s book, MS Royal 17.C.xviii, as well as MS Rawlinson C.894. But this connection might be taken to imply a

relationship between them via copies of the work, for, as Julia Boffey has recently noted, “household connections were at the heart of many London networks.”¹²⁰

William Harlowe, named in Canterbury Probate Court records as a “gentleman,” but whose will does not survive, died in 1562 and was buried in the Church of St. Mary the Virgin, Aldermanbury, nine years after MS Rawlinson C.894 had come into the possession of Edmund Roberts, according to his dated signature on the flyleaf.¹²¹ Although William himself remains an obscure figure, this signature opens up from the Harlowes to point to a textual community that also includes two other prominent mid-sixteenth-century London families, Bowes and Roberts.¹²²

In 1554, Elizabeth Harlowe, William’s daughter, married Sir Martin Bowes, officer of the Mint and goldsmith—her first husband, the haberdasher William Billingsley, having died the previous year.¹²³ Bowes had been mayor in the tumultuous year 1545–46, when he conducted the examination of Anne Askew—probably a granddaughter of William Baron—and is claimed to have uttered the confused words “yf a mowse eate [the host] ... I say that the mowse is damned” to Askew’s derision (“Alack poor mowse!”) on this occasion.¹²⁴ Edmund Roberts, who was born in 1520 and died in 1588, was also connected with the Bowes family: in 1596, his grandson became godson to a Bowes child, William. The Robertses, who kept a record of the family’s birth and death dates in the flyleaf of Rawlinson C.894 until the 1670s, were a yeoman family from Willesden, who achieved a baronetcy in the seventeenth century and had many business ties to London.¹²⁵ They, too, were devout. Edmund’s father, Thomas, owned books containing Nicholas Love’s *Mirror of the Life of Christ*, *Pore Caitif*, and other works.¹²⁶ William Harlowe thus seems to have kept one copy of the *Craft of Dying* (Royal 17.C xviii) for himself but given another copy (Rawlinson C.894) to a family associate. Both men may have planned to use the work in dying, and Harlowe’s gift implies he looked to the younger Roberts to help with his own death also.

Taken together with the survival of other London books containing the work, the story of William Harlowe’s two copies of the *Craft of Dying* suggests that lay Londoners made efforts to provide for themselves and for their peers the education in a good death that would allow them to die well and assist one another to do the same. More specifically, the story may also point to the arrangements needed in order to achieve a particular aspect of the good death on which the *Craft of Dying* sets much store: the absence of close family members or friends from the deathbed. Following similar advice in Gerson’s *Opusculum*, [chapter 5](#) of the *Craft of Dying* emphasizes that

“whan a man is in poynt of deeth and hastith faste to his ende,” memory of all worldly attachments is dangerous: “than shulde ther noo carnel frendes, ne wyf, ne children, ne rychesse, ne noo temporel goodes be reduced unto hys mynde, neither be comuned of [spoken about] before hym, bot asmoche as spirituel helthe & prophit of the syke man askith and requireth.”¹²⁷ Discussing the temptation to avarice in [chapter 2](#), the work notes, more severely, that the consequences of failure to say a proper goodbye to kin, friends, and business affairs can be spiritually disastrous: “The fifthe temptacyon that temptith and grevyth moost carnal men & secular men, that ben in overmoche occupacyon & besynes outward aboute temporal thynges, as her wyves, her children, her carnal frendes & worldly rychesse, & other thynges that they have loved inordinatly before; for he þat wyl dey wel & seurlly must utterly & fully putte away oute of hys mynde alle temporal & outwards thynges and plenerly commytte himself al to God.”¹²⁸ Thus the need to settle one’s affairs and write one’s will well in advance, in order to avoid dying “untestat or unavysed and undisposed,” as Thorley recognized in his own will: sick with worry about the crisis in family and business affairs that death often entails.

The evidence of other death texts in the *Tractatus* tradition suggests that anxiety about the need to turn from the world before the moment of death was common in early sixteenth-century London. In the Vérard translation of *L’Art de bien mourir*, the temptation to avarice is again associated with worry over “gret ryches and possessyons, qwych as fayr wyffys & fayr lygnayge & al worldly goodis,” as the devil in the avarice woodcut suggests “intende thesauro” and “provideas amicis” (look to your riches! provide for your friends!), before intruding himself into the text to lament: “O ... thy wyf also thy fayr chyldryn, qwych thow has so mooch lovyt, thou leyvse them inprovydyde!” Even if the good angel retorts that to renounce brother, sister, father, mother, wife, or children “for my nam” on the deathbed is to receive hundredfold reward (Matt. 19:29), the size of the reward is a measure of the difficulty of the act.¹²⁹

In order to avoid reminding the dying person of worldly ties, the “covent” present to help the dying make a good death should thus consist of individuals with whom one is not too intimate but who can be trusted to exercise the significant responsibilities their role as attendant entails. They should form, that is, what Katherine Lynch calls a “spiritual kinship,” parallel to godparenthood or membership of a religious guild or fraternity, whose sole function is to help the dying person turn from the world in obedience to Christ’s words in Matthew 10:37: “Anyone who loves their father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; anyone who loves their son or daughter more than me

is not worthy of me.”¹³⁰ Caxton’s death texts both imagine this community in the keeping of “a felawe & trewe frende devoute and convenable,” a “specyall frende, the whiche well hertly helpe and praye for hym & therwyth counseyll the syke for the wele of his sowle, & moreover to see that alle other so do aboute hym, or ellys quickly for to make hem departe.”¹³¹ In the twin Harlowe manuscripts, and perhaps in other copies of the *Craft of Dying*, we see traces of the networks of associates, linked by religious knowledge and spiritual responsibility rather than blood or carnal connections, the work requires its lay readers to create.

Despite owning a manuscript closely associated with the Harlowe manuscripts, Oxford, Corpus Christi College MS 220, Sir John and Isabel Manningham have no known connection with the Harlowes and convey none of the air of literate devotion that characterized that family. Corpus Christi College 220, a book of unusual construction with quires stitched together with leather thongs, partly written on fragments of a fourteenth-century account roll, is the only book associated with the couple—their names, “Manyngham John,” “I Dame Isabell Manygham,” appear on f. 61—and left the family upon Isabel’s death, when it passed to Mary Denys, a nun of Lacock in Wiltshire.¹³² Even this book, which contains only the *Twelve Profits* and its regular companions the *Craft of Dying* and *Ghostly Battle*, looks as though it was produced for them in a hurry or purchased on the cheap.¹³³

Sir John Manningham was from a landed gentry family in Bedfordshire, where he was a commissioner for the peace in 1455. He married Edith, with whom he had a son, William, perhaps born in 1454, and a daughter, Katharine, who died in 1472.¹³⁴ In 1471, he appears to have fought in the Battle of Barnet for the Earl of Warwick on the Lancastrian side and, in 1473, was duly indicted by Edward IV “of divers offences against the Crown and afterwards outlawed,” losing his lands to Lord Grey of Ruthvin, although the attainder was reversed in 1475.¹³⁵ After Edith died, Sir John married Isabel (thus acquiring a manor at Stratford-at-Bow, just outside the city walls), and moved to London to live near St. Katherine Kree, the church next to the Augustinian priory of Holy Trinity, Christ Church in Aldgate. Among other records linking the family to the parish, a John Manningham appears as plaintiff in a 1492 consistory court case trying to recover a defaulted loan for twenty shillings. If this is Sir John, he was litigious or money conscious.¹³⁶ He died in 1499, having made a will in 1496 and updated it in 1498. His wife, whose will also survives, lived a further twenty years.¹³⁷

At first, Sir John’s will seems to resemble Thorley’s, opening with a

similar set of sententious observations, adjusted to take into account the testator's advanced age of seventy:

I, John Mannyngham knyght, felyng myself enfebled and daily visited by sondry infirmities in my body and right unweldy in this my decrepite age. Considering the shortenesse of mannes life in this transitorie Worlde and vale of misery and howe that it is ordeyned for man ones to dye. Preventinn therfore the soden houre of the comyng of deth. Which to every creature is so ordeyned and spareth no man. Remembering also most in speciall howe that almighty god of his grete infinite mecy hath given me long tyme and space of life to remembre me of my defawtes and leiser of respite to dispose suche goodes as he hath endewed me with in this present life. Rather then deth sodenly shulde take me and so intestateli to decesse therfore or that the coldenesse of deth derken my mynde and cause my wittes to faile, I make ordeyne declare and dispose this my present testament conteynnyng my last wille, in my hoole mynde beyng I thank almighty god.

But the will has two remarkable features. The first is the expensive arrangements it makes to ensure prayers for the souls of Sir John, his parents, and his deceased first wife, Edith. Buried not in his parish church but in the neighboring priory of Holy Trinity, Sir John leaves money for a canon “duly and devoutely to syng and sey and hertily to pray for my soule” over a period of three years at the altar of St. Leonard, patron of prisoners, near his tomb, outlining the arrangements to be followed in detail. The canon must pray for Sir John and his kin each day between nine and ten; sing thirty masses according to the *ordo* of ten major feast days each Friday, and say further masses on seven great feast days, answering before God that he will “sing and sey after the true meanyng and mynde of this myn entent and wille.” In the vicinity of his estates, prayers are to be purchased from the poor of Stratford-at-Bow, and bells are to be rung weekly for a year in the church at Wrestlingworth on the day of his death, “for a memoryall to all the people there aboute dwellynge of my decesse.” Back in London, every house of friars in the city is to sing masses over the same three years, while two of the four trentals assigned to each are to be sung, if possible, at the very moment “whan I lye in the article and poynt of deth laboring toward the everlastynge life,” with fifteen masses “of the woundes of oure lord Jhesu Criste” also to be sung “immediately after my decesse ... dureyng the space of xv dayes into the relieffe and foryevenesse” of Sir John’s sins and those of his kinsfolk. There are standard charitable gifts: moneys for the prisoners of London and Westminster, gifts for church building. But liturgical death rituals, always offered in aid both of Sir John and of his parents and first wife, Edith, take up much of the document.¹³⁸

The second remarkable feature of the will is its indication of Sir

John's severely troubled relationship with his son from his first marriage, who appears to have been about the same age as his second wife, Isabel. The 1496 will already worries over William's harassment of Isabel, bequeathing the family estates to him "under condicion that the same William ... nor vexe ne trowble my seid wife of hire Joyntere," and empowering Isabel, sole executor under the oversight of two powerful Londoners, Sir Reynold Bray and Sir John Shaa, to sell all his property and distribute it in "almesdedes to pore people and other dedes of charite for my soule" if he fails to comply.¹³⁹

The 1498 codicil then tries to ensure that, despite his status as heir, "the same William have no parte ne parcell of my moevable goods," and puts on record this extraordinary rationale:

ffor he hath ben unto me, bothe young and olde, an Innatural and Unkynde sone, conspiring my deth he and his moder togiders in my grete trowble after barnet feld; whan I had made my peas with kyng Edward, then they empeched me of newe which cost me grete goode or I coude be quyte thereof, and which coude never syns passe moche oute of my mynde. Also he hath pleated me and caused me to loose in many sundry wises above the some of vc li [500 pounds]. Also, he hath disceyved me oftentimes and ylle diffamed me by unkynde and Innaturall wordes. And after my many grete visitacions he hath gaped after my deth with moche unkynde language. Which hath renewed my olde sores and trowbles. Wherby my mynde hath ben alwey greatly vexed. Many other causes cowde I shewe moo than these which were to Innatural and ungodly to be herd of, that he hath trespaced in agenst me, god forgive it hym and I doo. Ffor I have delte with hym as a naturall fader, and so entended to have contynued. Save only for hys manyfold deservings as knowith god, like as a parte thereof is shewed in a bylle of complaynt by me made ayenst hym.... And after that his Innaturall and unkynde dealyng causide me to doo as I have done.

Court records suggest William was notorious. In 1484, a William Manyngham was charged with fornication with a parishioner at St. Katherine Kree, Katherine Sidney.¹⁴⁰ In 1493, in a case regarding a dispute between Clemens Staunton and her son, Thomas Shukburgh, William is named as "son of Sir John Mannyngham, Knyght," and a "wilde and rioutouse" person, "as is openly knowen."¹⁴¹ But the trouble between him and his father went back more than twenty years and involved both William's own "Innatural" behavior toward his father and his mother's in helping her son attack her husband with a lawsuit that "coude neuer syns passe moche oute of my mynde," perhaps in part because it "renewed" the "olde sores and trowbles" of the period when Sir John's property, and potentially his life, was under threat.

Sir John Manningham's will thus keeps alive the memory of a family drama with roots in the bitter struggles and ethical complications of the Wars of the Roses and of its traumatic effect on

the family patriarch. In the process, it also details a real, and most challenging, situation within which the *Craft of Dying* and its manuscript companions may have been used. “Now syt sadly in thys sadylle,” exhorts *Ghostly Battle* in language well suited to an old soldier: “for noo wrathhe nere unpacience for sekenes, or for losse off gode, ne losse of name ... late nat thy horse caste the owte of thy sadylle of pacience.” God commands that justice must be done to all: “to youre sufferaynes and to youre felawes and to youre subgettis, and to he that be passede owte off thys worlde with almesdede doying and yeldyng off dettis, and to hem that bene to come in savyng off her ryghte inherytaunce.” Those who favor anyone too much, “hynderyng ... anothers ryghte,” make a hole in their “habergeoune” through which the fiend “may sle” the soul. The Christian must try “neyther to stryve ne to plete ... but ... lyve in pease with alle mene yef ye mowene.”¹⁴²

Against William’s renewing of Sir John’s “olde sores and trowbles” and palpable anxiety to inherit (“And after my many grete visitacions he hath gaped after my deth”), the will attempts to work within this practical ethical paradigm. It duly includes the traitorous first wife, Edith, in all the arrangements for Sir John’s own soul; it does not unduly promote the rights of his second wife, Isabel, over those of his son even in the codicil; and it publicly forgives his son even as it accuses him (“god forgive it hym and I doo”), attempting not to succumb to “wrathhe nere unpacience,” close though these passions lie to the surface.

Yet it is still unclear how Sir John could hope to obey the *Craft of Dying*’s “he þat wyl dey wel” must “fully putte away oute of hys mynde alle temporal & outwards thynges,” when the time came for him to be, in his eloquent phrase, “in the article and poynt of deth laboring toward the everlastynge life,” and no clearer how he could achieve even the anxious confidence of his own salvation the work requires in order to be adequately performed. Two of the five deathbed sins, avarice (anxiety about the world) and impatience (unwillingness to accept death), are built into Sir John’s situation. A third, despair, might follow, not least in the context of memories of the violence and betrayal to which all who participated in a battle such as Barnet Field—in which the rights due “sufferaynes ... felawes and ... subgettis,” as *Ghostly Battle* has it, was the very matter at issue—must have been susceptible. The elaborate arrangements the will makes for masses sung and said even as he lies dying, at odds with the emphasis on interior disposition of the *Craft of Dying* though they are, may have been Sir John’s way of preparing for a death for which he could not hope to be quite ready according to the stern criteria of the death texts available to him. If the mercantile world into which the

Harlowe books, MS Royal 17.C.xviii and MS Rawlinson C.894, take us seems, in theory, well prepared for the demands of the *Craft of Dying*, here the work speaks to a situation that seems close to desperate: likely to amplify as much as to assuage the situation for which it was designed.

The Exercise of Death in Henrician England

Martin Luther's *Sermon von der Bereitung zum Sterben*

Prefacing a collected edition of his Latin works in 1545, Martin Luther, by now one of the most controversial theologians in Europe, describes a crisis, his so-called Tower experience, from some twenty-five years earlier. The crisis was personal and theological at once: "Though I lived as a monk without reproach, I felt that I was a sinner before God with an extremely disturbed conscience. I could not believe that he was placated by my satisfaction. I did not love, indeed I hated the righteous God who punishes sinners, and secretly ... I was angry with God."¹ Weighed down with a sense of sin and an inability to believe that God could be content with the works of penance and satisfaction he had long undertaken, Luther remembers himself as caught in a vicious cycle of self-critique, spiritual pain, and terror of God's wrath. In terms of the religious tradition with which, by 1545, he had long broken, Luther's reported experience was of tribulation: a capacious pastoral category, we have seen, that included spiritual or physical pain, temptation, and preoccupation with personal sin, but that was viewed as a spiritually productive form of mortification, crucial not only for expiation of sin and spiritual debt but also for the wider project of spiritual maturation and self-care through which the Christian prepared for heaven.

For Luther, however, the pain of sin and the entire structure of penitential consciousness associated with it was intolerable. Indeed, it was his desperate resistance to this structure that, according to his retrospective account, led late in 1519 to what Reformation scholars take to be the great breakthrough in his thinking: his development of the idea of "passive justice," justification not by sacrament or moral conversion but by faith alone. As he famously writes, "the justice of God is revealed through the Gospel, but it is a passive justice, i.e. that

by which the merciful God justifies us by faith, as it is written: “The just person lives by faith.”²

It was also late in 1519, on the brink of the “Tower” experience, that Luther wrote for the influential layman Markus Schart his vernacular *ars moriendi*, *Ein Sermon von der Bereitung zum Sterben* (Sermon on preparing to die).³ This brief discourse instructs the reader on how to deal with the “three evils” of the deathbed that can lead the soul, at Satan’s urging, to damnation: “first, the terrifying image of death; second, the awesomely manifold image of sin; third, the unbearable and unavoidable image of hell and eternal damnation.”⁴ In twenty numbered paragraphs, Luther describes the death preparations it is necessary to make, the key role played by the sacraments as aids to the dying (including confession and unction), the need not to “open the home” of the imagination to the “three evils” or give way to doubt about one’s election, and the importance of trusting in Christ’s victory and the divine mercy.⁵ “Christ remained silent” on the cross “in the face of all [the] words and horrible pictures” cast at him by the Jews, as they pressed on him the images of death, sin, and hell through their taunting words, “in wild confusion.” So, too, “we must ... let these images slip away from us to wherever they wish or care to go, and remember only that we cling to God’s will, which is that we hold to Christ and firmly believe our sin, death, and hell are overcome in him and no longer able to harm us. Only Christ’s image must abide in us. With him alone we must confer and deal,” ending life not with fear of judgment but in an attitude of gratitude and divine praise.⁶

Partly because it was written so close in time to the Tower experience, Reformation scholars have often sought to find in this immensely popular *Sermon*—which by the end of 1522 had already been printed more than twenty times in German as well being translated into Latin, Danish, and Dutch—a repudiation of the earlier *ars moriendi* tradition in which it participates, paralleling what is seen as Luther’s repudiation of earlier salvation theologies. The argument for a break with medieval practice often depends on (generally unsympathetic) readings of the death text discussed in [Chapter 4](#), *Tractatus de arte bene moriendi* and its descendants (especially the woodcut *ars moriendi*), as well as Suso’s *Learn to Die*, the death text discussed in [Chapter 3](#).⁷

Yet just as more historically inquisitive work on Luther’s doctrine of justification is showing his debts to a long theological conversation, so an approach to the *Sermon* through a more broadly based understanding of the *ars moriendi* tradition shows the *Sermon* thinking intimately and resourcefully *within* this tradition, rather than against it.⁸ When he wrote the work, Luther’s theology was itself still relatively traditional: in 1519, he had not yet rejected the

nonscriptural sacraments, the mediating power of the Virgin and the saints, the doctrine of purgatory, or the theology of works. Much of his advice about deathbed preparation—Christians must dispose properly of their temporal goods, resolve their relationships with others, and become familiar “with death during our lifetime, inviting death into our presence when it is still at a distance and not on the move,” while doing proper penance for the sins—is standard.⁹

Some of Luther’s apparent innovations, such as the emphasis on the sacraments, on the presence of the saints and angels, not living “even-cristen,” as deathbed attendants, and on the passivity of the dying person, are even conservative, taking us back to earlier forms of deathbed practice such as are found in the *Ordo ad visitandum infirmum*. His recommendation that the dying person think of heaven, not hell, recalls the opening of Baudri of Bourgeil’s *De visitatione infirmorum*, with its evocation of the New Jerusalem, used in the *Visitation of the Sick* and well known in fourteenth- and fifteenth-century Germany.¹⁰ His insistence that, at death, “only Christ’s image must abide in us” recalls the urgent metaphor of “wrapping” the self in Christ with which the soul departs from the world in the Anselmian *Admonitio morienti*, also used in the *Visitation* and in other texts, including the *Tractatus*. As is also true of the contemporary death text that Luther most admired, Johannes Staupitz’s 1515 *Büchlein von der Nachfolge des willigen Sterbens Christi* (Little book on the imitation of Christ’s willing death), almost every position taken in the *Sermon* finds a parallel in a death text from the previous century or earlier.¹¹

Yet the *Sermon* does take definite stands within the *ars moriendi* tradition, partly developed in urgent dialogue with versions of the *Tractatus*—which, in 1500, was at the height of its European popularity—and sometimes pointing indistinctly to the evangelical future. In particular, the *Sermon* questions the high value placed on the cultivation of salutary fear in death meditation texts such as Suso’s *Learn to Die*, which asks its audience to meditate on the death of a beautiful dying sinner, wholly unsure of his salvation, and to internalize fiercely the emotions of the scene. Death texts always insist that fear must be avoided or mastered at the deathbed itself. But the assumption that contemplation of death is a spiritually beneficial activity, part of a perfectionist life of ascetic self-mortification, runs deep in many fifteenth-century *artes moriendi* and inflects their understanding of the psychic struggles taking place on the deathbed in ways that sometimes support the deployment of what the *Craft of Dying* calls a “holsom fere and drede” in order to arouse the impenitent or over-confident to awareness of their danger.

The *Sermon* does not explicitly dismiss death meditation as part of death preparation. But it places such weight on avoiding the images

(bilder) of sin, death, and fear as to limit significantly the practice's scope and usefulness: "You must not view or ponder death as such, not in yourself or in your nature, nor in those who were killed by God's wrath and were overcome by death. If you do that you will be lost and defeated with them." Only meditation on Christ and the saved is beneficial as the hour of death approaches: "Resolutely turn your gaze, the thoughts of your heart, and all your senses away from this picture and look at death closely and untiringly only as seen in those who died in God's grace and who have overcome death, particularly in Christ and then also in all his saints."¹²

In understanding fear as an enemy at the deathbed, diabolical in origin and not even of potential usefulness, the *Sermon* also adopts two further stances. First, it is critical of the insistence of texts like the *Tractatus* that the dying need to be brought to a difficult and carefully balanced state of spiritual readiness for their coming ordeal. The emphasis of the *Tractatus*—born in the violent reformism of early fifteenth-century conciliarism—on the examination of the dying in matters of faith, doctrine, life, and morals and its desire to arrive at a confident knowledge of their salvation is inimical to Luther's view that sin "grows large and important when we dwell on it and brood over it too much," made worse "by the fearfulness of our conscience, which is ashamed before God and accuses itself terribly," leaving it in danger of being "overcome" with "those who abide in sin to the end and are damned."¹³ By enjoining a resolute confidence that depends on the careful avoidance of self-examination, Luther develops a version of the pastoral "minimalization" (*Minimalisierungsprogramm*) of salvation theology that Berndt Hamm finds in late fifteenth-century pastoralia in general and certain of Luther's colleagues in particular.¹⁴

Second, in arguing that the dying person must cultivate a kind of inner stasis, trusting that on the deathbed "he is not alone ... that a great many eyes are upon him ... the eyes of God and of Christ ... of the dear angels, of the saints and of all Christians," and refusing to worry over the question of authentic repentance, the *Sermon* severely limits the role of the attendants and the value of deathbed community.¹⁵ Rather than being the collective business of the dying person and his "even-cristen," death is solely a matter between the dying person and the community of the elect. The doctrine of "passive justice" makes no explicit appearance. But by comparison to the questing self of the *Tractatus*, still searching out, with the help of the attendants, anything that might hold the soul back on its journey to heaven, the self imagined in the *Sermon* is indeed passive, its main activity that of maintaining within itself exemplary images of the good and avoiding images of the evil while it trusts in the saving work of Christ. This is a quiet, even a lonely, deathbed, beyond the reach of

pastoral care, because all that can be done already has been done. The biblical examples to which Luther alludes throughout the *Sermon* all tend to set firmly in the past the drama of salvation that in earlier artes moriendi accompanies death.

In place of two expansive and complex modes—ascetic self-care and affective witnessing—Luther thus enjoins a simplified deathbed experience, consisting of one activity (“praise”) informed by one spiritual disposition (“faith”): contemplation of Christ’s victory over sin and confidence in God’s mercy and one’s election. To invoke Hamm again, although the *Sermon* does not yet propound the theology of justification by faith alone (“sola fides”), it is still redolent of the processes of “normative centering” (“normative Zentrierung”) “that characterize the early phases of the Reformation” and which Hamm defines as “concentration upon *sola*-principles—the Holy Scriptures alone, godly law alone, faith alone, the community of the faithful with Christ alone, the redemptive act of Christ alone, the effectiveness of God’s grace alone, and the honor of God alone.”¹⁶ In a state of deep fear, as his Tower narrative informs us, Luther determined to make fear the enemy, creating a structure that is at once reminiscent of the ars moriendi before the *Tractatus* imposed its rhetoric of spiritual perfectionism on the tradition and also reflective of the radical new antipenitential evangelical theology Luther was already developing and that would make him one of the major forces in early sixteenth-century Europe. Whether we think of him as going behind the *Tractatus* or moving beyond it, the effect is to reduce considerably the complexity of a key area of theological and pastoral thought and praxis.

We do not know if the *Sermon* itself crossed the Channel, but Luther’s books were circulating in England by 1519, according to a letter from Desiderius Erasmus to Luther in May of that year.¹⁷ Early in 1521, Cuthbert Tunstall, bishop of London, wrote to the king’s chancellor, Cardinal Thomas Wolsey, suggesting that these books be kept out.¹⁸ Wolsey’s response to the Lutheran threat was a spectacular event in the churchyard of St. Paul’s Cathedral, at which (according to the Venetian ambassador, Lodovico Spinelli) John Fisher, bishop of Rochester, gave a lengthy English sermon against Luther, after which Wolsey formally cursed the heretic while his works were burnt.¹⁹ Five years later, St. Paul’s hosted a second event, again presided over by Wolsey and attended by thirty-six bishops and abbots, at which four Hanseatic merchants living in the Steelyard, near the Church of All Hallows the Great, had to do public penance for owning Lutheran books discovered in a raid by Thomas More.²⁰ Again, according to John Foxe, “great baskets ful of bokes” were burned “afore the rode

[cross] of Northen,” while the cardinal looked on “lyke a bloody Antichrist.”²¹

Although the English Reformation slowly gained ground during the 1530s, after Henry VIII’s divorce, the English church’s repudiation of the doctrines and sacraments underlying earlier death practice was given full liturgical expression only in the much simplified version of the *Ordo ad visitandum infirmum* in Edward VI’s second prayer book of 1552, which came into long-term use with Elizabeth after 1559.²² Too many questions surround it for me to discuss it here, but one English evangelical death text seems to have been written in the 1530s, *Of the Preparation to the Crosse and to Death, and of the comforte under the crosse and deathe*, perhaps by Richard Tracy, printed in 1540.²³ The three major artes moriendi published during this decade, Richard Whitford’s *Daily Exercise of Death*, Desiderius Erasmus’s *Preparation to Death*, and Thomas Lupset’s *A Treatise of Dying Well*, all London productions, are not aligned confessionally with Luther. From Thomas Becon’s *The Sick Man’s Salve* of 1561 (first published 1560) and William Perkins’s *Salve for a Sick Man* of 1595 to Jeremy Taylor’s *Rule and Exercises of Holy Dying* of 1651, the history of the Reformed English ars moriendi is beyond the scope of this book.

Some scholars of the early modern ars moriendi have nonetheless argued for a kinship between the Henrician death texts, particularly those of Erasmus and Lupset, and the burgeoning Reformation tradition, based on a supposedly common set of themes and attitudes. Luther’s revision of death preparation in the *Sermon* into a single focused cultivation of faith in Christ’s saving grace is especially directed toward alleviating the fear born of anxiety over the experience of repentance: the spiritually advanced but debilitating fear known as scrupulosity that was a by-product of the perfectionist tendencies of fifteenth-century death manuals such as the *Craft of Dying*. As we shall see in detail in the rest of this chapter, the desire to counter fear as the most critical obstacle to dying a good death is also a powerful focus of the death texts by Whitford, Erasmus, and Lupset. To David Atkinson and others, drawing on the work of Nancy Lee Beaty, such apparent commonalities between traditions suggest a wider sixteenth-century repudiation not only of fear but of the embrace of fear. Such morbidity is taken to be central to the fifteenth-century artes moriendi, with their practical, often paraliturgical concern with the actual deathbed, “emotional extravagances,” and tendency—said to be shared even by More’s 1522 treatise *The Last Things*—to a “decidedly medieval” prioritization of the transcendent. In this too-familiar construction of the relationship between medieval and early modern, whether by offering liberation from the penitential gloom of medieval “devotionalism” like the evangelicals, Luther and

Tracy, or by fusing the more “vital” classical emphasis on “rational understanding” with “pious Christian teaching” like the humanists, Erasmus and Lupset, these thinkers from disparate traditions collectively articulate a view of death that at long last embraces life.²⁴

Yet although the Henrician works do share with Luther’s *Sermon* and the medieval texts with which it is in conversation a careful interest in the relationship between outer form and inner experience, when it comes to fear, their concerns are quite different. Rather than being preoccupied with fear as a problematic aspect of spiritual perfectionism, their joint focus is on the more basic fear of physical death itself. Like the topos repeated in all the Henrician works that learning to die is about learning to live, the natural fear of death is also an invariable theme of medieval *artes moriendi*, lying behind the frequent appeals to classical philosophy that these texts share with their humanist descendants, which provide a common storehouse of *sententiae* on the inevitability of death and the need to embrace it rather than give way to futile fear and grief. If not in the way that Atkinson and Beaty would have us believe, however, the special focus on natural fear in the death texts of the 1530s is something new, and it is with it that my attempt to define what is indeed the radical distinctiveness of the Henrician *ars moriendi* begins.

As a religious genre integral to the economic and political as well as moral management of self, household, and city, we have seen that the *ars moriendi* is exceptionally porous to social influence and to changing structures of governance. On the national and civic level, England had undergone a “revolution in governance” during the decades leading up to the 1530s, as the legal and political structures of authority and allegiance were progressively simplified and centralized in a secular version of Hamm’s “*sola-principles*.” Beginning under Henry VII, whose reign at first rested on the effective suppression of internal conflict, early sixteenth-century England saw an intensification of the purview of royal governance and a proliferation of new laws regulating social behavior, economic activity, and labor relations. Attacking the dispersal of fealty and jurisdiction across the realm, Henry VII sought to limit the power of retainers, subjecting them to the rule of royal justice and dismantling local “affinities” between the great nobles and gentry by supplanting them as the main source of preferment. London also saw the loss of many hard-won liberties, including the right to approve the ordinances of corporate bodies such as guilds—which after 1504 had to be approved by a committee headed by the royal chancellor—and, with this right, the ability to approve or block the economic or other activities of the corporations. As power shifted from city to court, with royal interference even in the election of city officers, to the “uttry

derogacion” of “the lybertees of the Cyte,” London’s mayor and aldermen “were effectively demoted to mere foremen with responsibility over the companies only for the day-to-day business of quality and behavioural monitoring.”²⁵ By the 1530s, London had ceded more power than it had been forced to do even in the 1380s.

The many consequential pieces of religious legislation of the 1530s—especially the 1534 Act of Supremacy, Henry VIII’s spectacular move to centralize the country’s jurisdictional structure further by becoming head of both church and state—may thus owe as much to Henry VII’s innovative extension of royal governance as they do to the theological debates about the nature of royal power that accompanied them. The same is true of the official violence that was another signal feature of the Henrician regime, which by expanding the crimes categorized as felonies and thus punishable by death created many more opportunities than kings had enjoyed over the centuries for the spectacle of royal power as it was made manifest in the broken body of the criminal. Whether felony, treason, or heresy was in question, “statutes mandating” sentences of death, which as J. A. Sharpe notes, “represent the most nakedly obvious sign of state power ... poured forth from the Tudor parliaments.” Some executions featured innovative new methods such as boiling or hanging in chains—the practice of leaving the chained body of felon or traitor to rot on the gallows—while the most celebrated of these orderly and moving occasions were preceded by gallows speeches, given by the condemned, and other elements of public theater.²⁶

Although the simplified and centralized governance structures created by the early Tudors provoke different responses from the Henrician death texts, their common concern with physical death is closely related to its ubiquity in the London of the 1520s and 1530s: a decade that also saw a crop of tribulation texts written by those awaiting execution in the Tower, among them More’s *Dialogue of Comfort* and Fisher’s *A Spiritual Consolation*, both understandably preoccupied with death.²⁷ Lupset’s *A Treatise of Dying Well* and Whitford’s *Daily Exercise of Death* were first printed in 1534, the year the visionary nun Elizabeth Barton was executed for heresy after opposing the king’s divorce. Erasmus’s *Preparation to Death*, written in 1533–34 at the request of Thomas Boleyn, appeared in English in 1538: three years after the execution of More and Fisher for refusing to submit to the Act of Supremacy, two years after that of Boleyn’s daughter and son, Anne and George, and a year after over two hundred people were executed at Tyburn for resisting the dissolution of the monasteries in the Pilgrimage of Grace.²⁸

Surrounded by death, these texts directly recall or anticipate such judicial acts of violence and many less celebrated ones. Far from

implying a critique of *The Book of the Craft of Dying* and its printed siblings, texts still in active use, their common call to readers to face death with fortitude, confidence, and joy is fiercely focused on the political present, which it is their task to make tolerable, indeed, salutary: a place where life can be lived well in preparation for death in a world in which the topoi of death's "inevitability" and its "uncertainty" have taken on uncomfortable new political resonances. This, I argue, is why these three very different texts all emphasize a specifically bodily fear, revisiting several of the emphases of earlier artes moriendi in the process. Most striking, it is also why these texts sometimes appear to follow Luther's *Sermon* in shifting attention away from the household scene of dying in community, surrounded by "even-cristen." Death "is of mans lyfe the last part (as it were) of the playe, wherof hangeth eyther everlastyng blysee of man, or everlastyng damnation," writes Erasmus, thanking Thomas Boleyn for the opportunity to expound this "very perfyte conclusyon of Christes lore" in the dedicatory epistle to the *Preparation to Death*.²⁹ Dying had always been public, witnessed in the home by a group of specially selected attendant onlookers. Here and in all the Henrician death texts it becomes a public *spectacle*, the denouement of a secular drama whose witnesses might be anyone and setting might be anywhere. Now death does not only have to be endured. Given the real possibility of a violent juridical end and all that this entails, it also has to be performed.

Richard Whitford's *Daily Exercise and Experience of Death*

Written and published from Syon Abbey, since its inception a powerful symbol of reformist orthodoxy, the *Daily Exercise and Experience of Death* and a closely related text, *A Work for Householders*, represent an impressive rearticulation and updating of the manuscript genre of the household miscellany explored in [Chapter 1](#). Both works are by Richard Whitford, an Oxford-educated theologian, fellow of Queen's College, Cambridge, chaplain to the bishop of Winchester, Richard Foxe, and friend of Erasmus and More, who entered Syon around 1507, where he became one of the house's most prolific vernacular authors and translators.³⁰ *A Work for Householders*, a manual of spiritual management addressed "pryncypally unto housholders or unto them that have gydyng and governaunce of any company for an ordre to be kepte bothe in them selfe and in them that they have in rule and charge," was first published in 1530 by Wynkyn

de Worde and reprinted eight times through the decade.³¹ In one of these editions, a large compilation published by John Wayland in 1537, it was joined by the *Daily Exercise*, apparently first written some twenty-five years earlier “at the request of the reverende Mother Dame Elizabeth Gybs,” abbess of Syon from 1498 to 1518, but perhaps updated to suit its new context and audience. This work had previously been printed on its own in 1534, in response to continuing demand from “divers devout persones,” for whom Whitford claims already to have made numerous copies by hand.³² Combining a death text first written with nuns in mind and a work written from the start for a lay readership, the 1537 compilation, which also includes *A Work of Preparation or of Ordinance unto Communion or Houseling*, fuses the ascetic and the catechetical, the contemplative and the active lives, in a manner relatively unusual in England a hundred years earlier but with which, by the sixteenth century, Londoners were growing familiar.

This fusion is, indeed, anticipated in the carefully articulated double program of *A Work for Householders* itself. The fuller fifteenth-century lay household books, such as London, Westminster School MS 3, still in metropolitan circulation into the early sixteenth century, include devotional texts, generalized lay rules, and elaborate expositions of catechetical items, and understand their privileged lay readers in two ways, as objects of instruction and as teachers of others. Written for “good, symple and devout soules that wolde fayne lyve well your selfe and also ordre and confort all other unto the same,” *A Work for Householders* separates these two functions, organizing its catechetical teaching into a detailed daily script for use in instructing the household governor’s familia—blood relations, servants, and others—but providing a separate daily devotional regime of a more ambitious kind for the busy household governor himself.³³ The effect is to make explicit a model of governance only latently present in Westminster 3, in which the spiritual self-governance the householder must “fyrst ... begyn with” before he can govern his dependents is openly borrowed from the regimes practiced by “religious persones.”³⁴ Rather as in the late fourteenth-century work known as the “Instructions for a Devout and Literate Layman,” this involves the reader in private morning and evening contemplations, which begin the day with prayers for contrition and spiritual strength before the lay reader goes “forth unto” the “busyness” of the day, and end with an evening exercise of self-examination.³⁵ Ordered and simple, if demanding to carry out, the work makes its double program fully available to a lay readership.

Central to both morning and evening exercises is the awareness of death: “Good devoute chrystyens, let us fyrst consydre that all we ben

mortall, as well the ryche as the poore, the yonge as the olde. There is no difference: none excepte al must nedes dye. And though we lyve very longe, yet shall we dye shortly.... And yet have we no certaynte, ne yet conjecture of knowledge, whan, where, how, or in what state we shall departe this lyfe. And sure we ben that as we ben founde at that tyme so shall we be taken ... and brought before the hygh judge that can not be deceyved to make a counte of all oure lyfe past.”³⁶ Having begun the day with by encouraging mindfulness of death and judgment to the great “profyte unto the helth of our soules,” the reader ends it by recalling judgment again, taking, preemptively, “a strayte rekenynge of every ydle or evyl werke” that has occurred: “before your bed ther knele downe and there begyn to remembre wheder ye wente, and what ye dyd immedyatly after your morowe exercyse, and in what company ye were, and what was there your behavvour and demeanour in werke, worde, or thought.”³⁷ Besides encouraging a general watchfulness, which presumably extends beyond the self to members of the household, this “maner of account and rekeneynge,” reminiscent of the anxiety over hidden and forgotten sins in the *Craft of Dying*, is guaranteed to “save you from the jeopardy of dampnacion.”³⁸

A Daily Exercise and Experience of Death, which in its printed version cross-references *A Work for Householders*,³⁹ supplies somewhat more complex materials for the reader’s daily regime, no longer using the fact of death to promote vigilance and self-discipline in life but giving death meditation and preparation a key role in the reader’s devotional life itself. The first part of the work—which at first seems only rather loosely connected to *A Work for Householders*—makes a general attempt to allay the fear of death, to “inforce and gyve dilygence to avoyde, exclude, exyle, and put ferre away: that chyldyssh wayne and folyssh feare, and drede of deth, that many persones have.”⁴⁰ The fear of death that Whitford works, with homiletic thoroughness, to calm is fear of physical pain and of uncertainty, which are proved foolish by a mass of Stoic, patristic, and scriptural authorities, with a particular emphasis on Aristotle and Cicero: two virtuous pagans whose lack of knowledge of God makes them well suited to teach Christians in this area. Although our “sensualyte and our carnall parte alway abhorre and feare naturally,” the soul does not fear.⁴¹ Just as two “marowes [companions] ... that muste nede labour bothe together” in a common purpose are glad “when theyr purpose is ended ... to depart unto theyr owne propre whomes [homes], logynges, and places,” even so at death soul and body *wish* to be separated and return each to “his propre whome, that is, the body unto the erthe ... And the soule unto hevyn,” by a means no more painful than “swonyng.”⁴²

The second part of the treatise then details the imaginative exercises used to make death less fearful before the event “by dayly use and custome” and to make possible a good death at the event itself by laying a solid ground of “experyence.” As Aristotle again enables us to realize, “yf you wyll have the actyve knowledge of dethe by the arte and crafte therof, you must begynne fyrste at exercise and use.”⁴³ The rest of the work is an account of two “fourmes” of the “exercyse of deth” (what “lerned men” call “meditatio mortis”), the lower of which involves imagining scenes of dying, while the higher involves a striking analogy between death and spiritual rapture, when “many a holy person”—Catherine of Siena is one of those singled out—“hath ben so depe in contemplacion that the body (for the tyme) was without the senses, so that whan they were prycked with pynnes, or nedles, they nothyng felte.”⁴⁴ If the first daily exercise allows meditators to put away fear, the second, more exclusive one—which in the final pages of the treatise Whitford develops into an entire contemplative regime—enables them “nat onely” to have “the experience and the full arte, scyence, connyng, and knowledge of dethe” and “the very practyse of dethe,” but to say “with saynt Paule: Cupio dissolui et esse cum Christo. I covete wysshe, and wyll, to be dissolved from this presente lyfe, and to be with Chryst.”⁴⁵

Just as fifteenth-century artes moriendi constantly proclaim that, though fearful, death is not to be feared, so these earlier works often enjoin somewhat similar modes of death meditation, instructing the reader to imagine the death of a beautiful young man (Suso’s *Learn to Die*) or, to “go out of þiself, þat is go out of þis world, and lerne to dye” by separating “þi soule fro þi body bi þinkyng” (the *Tower of All Towers*).⁴⁶ Although much of what Whitford has to say about contemplation would have been familiar to a layman such as William Baron, his instructions on spiritual rapture, which reflect the intense contemplative culture associated with Syon, are not easily paralleled in earlier death texts: “remayne, byde and dwell here styll, here expyre and dye starke deed and utterly that no soule ne spiryte be lefte or bye in youre body.”⁴⁷ But one of the two meditations on physical death takes us directly to a chaotic version of the scene of death envisaged in *The Visitation of the Sick* and the *Craft of Dying*. Readers are instructed to envision a person dying in a domestic space, surrounded by helpless but well-meaning attendants, “some wepyng and mournyng, some cryenge and callynge upon the sycke to remembre our lorde god and our moste swete savyour Jesu Christ, our blessyd lady with other holy sayntes,” while the dying person is so “combred with syckenes and payne” that “he can do lytle for hym selfe, all weke, feble, and infirme.”⁴⁸ Daily reflection on this dire scene and the inner battle with Satan that accompanies it causes the reader

to be “made redy before hande for all these maters” and “shortly come unto a better state,” partly by repeatedly rehearsing words of comfort drawn from earlier death texts.⁴⁹

Facing down the devil, the reader rehearses the old image of the soul as a stone awaiting its place in the wall of heavenly Jerusalem derived by the *Visitation* from Baudri’s *De visitatione infirmorum*: “as unto my synnes say you I have gadred them al togeder ... and brought them unto the ston there to be polysshed.”⁵⁰ Echoing the language of the Anselmian *Admonitio morienti* as represented by the *Craft of Dying*, readers are to image the moment when they throw themselves finally on the divine mercy, and “put that precyous blode with his bytter passyon and his most cruel and shamefull deth bytwene me and all the synnes that ever I dyd in thought, worde, or dede.”⁵¹ From evidence laid out in [Chapter 4](#), it seems possible that the *Craft of Dying* and other derivatives of the *Tractatus de arte bene moriendi* were in use at London deathbeds until perhaps the middle of the sixteenth century, and this allusion to the *Admonitio* could be taken to confirm this possibility.

A Daily Exercise and Experience of Death can thus be readily situated within the developing history of the fifteenth- and early sixteenth-century insular *ars moriendi* tradition, providing an important addition to the materials available to help readers prepare for the demanding deathbed laid out in the *Craft of Dying* in particular. Yet to read the work only in this decorous way would be to ignore many of the violent energies that course around and through it. During much of the 1530s, Syon was fighting a losing battle against evangelical theology, the king’s divorce from Catherine of Aragon, the assertion of royal supremacy over the English church, and its own dissolution in 1539, expressing its “steady opposition” to these events, as Alexandra da Costa has argued, through its vigorous use of print.⁵² One of Whitford’s immediate colleagues, Richard Reynolds—broker of a meeting at Syon between Thomas More and the visionary Elizabeth Barton, an opponent of the king’s policies, who stayed at Syon for only a year before her arrest and execution in 1534—was himself executed for refusing the royal supremacy in 1535. Like other members of the Syon community, Whitford endorsed the Act of Supremacy only slowly and with painful reluctance, and clearly considered sharing the fate of those, like Reynolds and More, who refused to do so.

As da Costa notes, the earlier of these events leave a specific trace in the 1534 edition of the *Daily Exercise*, where the work is followed by an addendum, added at the advice of a “wyse and lerned man” to direct the work better to the varied abilities of its new lay readership, in which Barton is actually mentioned as an example of the dangers of

the spiritual rapture: “For many have bothe deceyvyd themselfe: as nowe of late dyd appere in a religious woman a nune & mynchyn of saint Benettes ordre in Cantorbury called Elizabeth Barton: an ungraciouse woman & a divllysh, that these viii. yeres, moo or lesse, hathe deceyved many men that were full holy and devoute. For thos may honest be deceyved in such persons, because they evere suppose the beste in every persone, without suspicyon of evyll in any person.”⁵³ This uncertain and “extremely disingenuous” apologia for Syon’s significant involvement in the Barton affair, which has been removed from the versions of the addendum in the two 1537 printings of the *Daily Exercise*, marks the fact that the work’s account of spiritual rapture as a form of death meditation was set into print “probably just months after the Nun of Kent was hanged for treason”:⁵⁴ a devastating event for those at Syon and elsewhere who had seen in her a messenger of God in the line of Catherine of Siena and Bridget of Sweden themselves.⁵⁵

Yet the fear and knowledge of violent death in Whitford’s community and audience also finds its way into the *Daily Exercise* in a more intimate way, through direct images of violent death that counterpoint strangely the work’s attack on physical fear. Discussing and dismissing the fear felt in “our carnall parte” in the first part of the work, Whitford casually adds: “For you may se in experyence that some persones ben redy to swone or t’alme [faint] yf they se an other persone ... put unto great peynes and some done shake for feare whan they here tell howe some other persones shal be racked, and streyned. And some persones wyll abhorre to loke upon the instrumentes, or ingyngs of tourmentrye: as chyldren whan they se the rodde, or whyppe. Deth therefore is nat to be feared nor dredde for any payne that is therin.”⁵⁶ Most striking, in the second part of the work, as well as instructing readers to meditate their way through the events of the deathbed, he suggests that they prepare themselves imaginatively for a *public* death, presenting death by state execution as the heuristic focus of daily praxis:

In some convenyent tyme of the day or nyght appoynted and chosen for this exerceyse, you shall ymagyne, call unto remembraunce, and so set forth before the eyes and syght of your soule, howe you have sene or herde of a person that hathe ben condemned by judgement, unto bodily dethe, as to be brent, hanged, or heded, or suche other. Than saye or thynke unto your selfe: what and if I were in suche case as that person was; I knowe well, and knowledge unto our lorde, that I have deserved more cruel dethe (for every deedly synne, is worthy more payne than any worldly payne). Or els yf you were in suche case as you have dreded in your slepe, or herde of, dremyng, that you shulde forthwith go unto the execucyon of deth, without remedye: howe than wolde I do or how shulde I then, or were bounde to do for the salvacion of my soule.⁵⁷

Whether or not this innovative exercise was part of the *Daily Exercise* in its first version, it is well tailored to London in the 1530s, when all the forms of execution it mentions were common, and when dreams must often have been haunted by remembered or imagined public death.

Two things stand out from the appearance of these passages in the *Daily Exercise*. First, Whitford knows full well that they may exacerbate fear, not allay it. Acknowledging that all the death meditations in the work might be thought “mater overe hyghe and excedynge the wyttes and understandyng of symple unlernd people,” the addendum admits that “fewe persones myght attayne to the full heyght and clere understandynge therof,” but assures readers that the “assaye,” the “inforts and dilygence of the wyll,” is what matters.⁵⁸ It then offers, as an alternative, the practice of those who make a ritual of annual or quarterly attendance at prospective versions of their own funerals, with “all the solempnyte” of “buryalles ... [d]irige and masse,” followed by a funeral feast with almsgiving, “as thoughte they were than dede in dede & buryed.” This devout custom Whitford suggests might even be performed daily, praising it as an excellent defense against the “affraye” (terror) of sudden death.⁵⁹ Those incapable of spiritual rapture or for whom imagined executions may not provide the desired fortitude should revert to a ritual mode of death preparation we can imagine bringing comfort to a figure such as Sir John Manningham.

Second, the actual mechanisms of state torture and execution play at best an ethically ambiguous role in Whitford’s two imaginary scenarios. While he compares the “rodde, or whyppe” rightly used to terrify children into virtue with the state’s “instrumentes, or ingyngs of tourmentrye,” as though these, too, have a salutary function, Whitford’s execution meditation does not endorse state violence, but rather invites affective identification with the condemned. The analogy between the crimes for which the condemned person is to be “brent, hanged, or heded, or suche other” and the meditator’s own sins allows the possibility that this execution is just, but the meditator’s reflection that “I have deserved more cruel dethe” immediately suspends this possibility, leaving the question of moral, or political, desert hanging. Death determined and carried out at the hands of the state emerges as a neutral, almost mechanistic force, a mere backdrop to the real drama, which is spiritual: “howe than wolde I do or how shulde I then, or were bounde to do for the salvacion of my soule.” On the imagined scaffold, one’s soul hangs in the balance. One of the many state-sanctioned deaths potentially in play here is martyrdom.

State violence is never invoked in the fifteenth-century ars

moriendi. When it is invoked in other religious genres, such as the saint's life, usually in a safely ancient setting, it almost always has a clear moral valence, often a negative one.⁶⁰ During the first half of the 1530s, against a continuing backdrop of executions for ordinary felonies, it was as likely to be meted out to evangelical enemies of the theology for which Syon saw itself as a symbol as to its supporters. The year 1534, when royal supremacy over the English church became the driving force of royal policy, may have been the fulcrum, as the publication of the *Daily Exercise*—an unusual text to address to a mixed lay readership, as its addendum admits—perhaps acknowledges and as the executions of brothers and associates of Syon over the next years testifies.

As recently as 1532, Whitford had joined the debate on the role of the state in church governance, writing in his *Pipe of Perfection* against the “great heretykes,” especially that “arche heretike,” “Tyndalle,” who “delude and deceyve the people” by claiming that “all maner of persones as well spirituall as temporall shulde be obedient unto the prophane and seculer princes.”⁶¹ By the mid-1530s, as the obedience asked of Syon by the “prophane and seculer” prince came to be absolute, but also intolerable, Whitford's pastoral response was to buttress the role of household spiritual governance in *A Work for Householders* and other linked texts, and in the *Daily Exercise* to promote strategies for death preparation that reinforce a view of the state as itself “prophane.” Here, the state offers nothing to the life of the soul except an opportunity for stalwart meditators to fortify themselves imaginatively for the “ingyns” of a painful death at once public and isolated. Arguing that bodily fear of death is absurd and that the sole focus of death preparation must be to get ready for the spiritual victory that must be won, the *Daily Exercise* nonetheless continually and self-consciously returns to images of the death of the body through trance, swoon, ecstasy, illness, instrument of torture, axe, noose, or fire. While it may not give the full “experience ... of dethe” to any but contemplative experts, the work vividly conveys an environment in which daily death practice is a necessity, not a sign of spiritual privilege.

Desiderius Erasmus's *Preparation to Death*

If one of the patrons of the English ars moriendi during the 1530s was Syon Abbey, represented by the self-styled “wretched brother of Syon,” Richard Whitford, and haunted by premonitions of its coming institutional collapse at the instigation of the king, a more important patron was the king himself, acting through his printer, Thomas

Berthelet. Berthelet, a parishioner of St. Dunstan's, Fleet Street, succeeded Richard Pynson as the royal printer around 1530. He held the position, which came with a pension and the obligation to publish under the imprint "Londini in Aedibus Thomas Bertheleti regii impressoris excusus" (printed in London at the house of Thomas Berthelet, printer to the king) until Henry's death, seventeen years later, his output at least loosely reflecting the twists and turns of the royal self-presentation—or, in some instances, the attempts by others to mould that self-presentation—throughout this period.⁶²

Treatises on death or tribulation were an important part of this effort. One of the new royal printer's earliest projects was a translation of Erasmus's short *Declamatio de morte* from 1517, which Berthelet printed in 1531 as *A Treatise Perswadynge a Man Patientlye to Suffre the Deth of his Frende*, followed the next year by a work on the mortified solitary life, *The Dispisyng of the Worlde*, a translation of Erasmus's *De contemptu mundi* by Thomas Paynell, dedicated to Henry's sister, Mary, the year before her death.⁶³ In 1534, the year of the first edition of the *Daily Exercise*, Berthelet printed Thomas Lupset's *A Treatise of Dying Well* which I discuss later, reprinting the work twice in the 1540s, once by itself (1541), once as part of a Lupset collection (1546).⁶⁴ In 1540, as Thomas Cromwell tried to keep the king true to the evangelical principles laid out in the *Bishop's Book* (printed by Berthelet in 1536), he printed *Of the Preparation to the Crosse and to Death*, with a preface by its author or translator, Richard Tracy, which dedicates the work to Cromwell only months before the latter's execution.

Finally, in 1538, while the suppression of England's last monastic institutions was under way, and a year after nine monks of the London Charterhouse were starved to death in Newgate Prison, Berthelet printed the anonymous English translation of Erasmus's *De praeparatione ad mortem*, *Preparation to Deathe: A boke as devout as eloquent*, only four years after the first of many editions of this enormously popular work appeared in Basel and two years after the author's death.⁶⁵ As an Englishing of the last of the three devout works that the ambitious courtier and earl Thomas Boleyn commissioned from Erasmus, the *Preparation to Death* was an obviously suitable title to appear under the imprint of a king who remained eager to embellish his northern humanist credentials.⁶⁶ Not only did it connect Henry to a major humanist via the work's dedicatee, the king's former father-in-law (who by 1538 had been stripped of most of his offices, lands, and titles, and who died the following year),⁶⁷ but as Erasmus's work suggests, the *ars moriendi* was a prestige genre of universal import, as proper for a king to endorse as it recently had been for a royal monastery.

In Erasmus's hands, moreover, devotion was as vital to this prestige as eloquence, so far as the two might be distinguished. Alberto Tenenti argues that, in writing *De praeparatione*, "Erasmus completely abandons the traditional structure of the *ars moriendi* and of other similar tracts," but this is only superficially so.⁶⁸ The second part of the work is insistently practical, taking the reader through the usual topics surrounding the good death with sufficient rigor that it was found suitable, it is said, for use at the deathbed of the pious Catharine of Aragon in 1536.⁶⁹ Although the work is of its moment, reworking elements of *ars moriendi* discourse to its own purposes, the *Preparation to Death* is another extension of the European *ars moriendi* tradition this book has explored in insular works such as *The Visitation of the Sick* and the *Craft of Dying*. Like other texts Berthelet produced in the 1530s and 1540s, the work thus also confirms Henry in his role as head of the English church, with pastoral responsibility toward all his subjects.⁷⁰

The explicit interplay between the *Preparation to Death* and the earlier *artes moriendi* tradition, especially the *Tractatus de arte moriendi*, is clear from the work's opening statement:

Of all dradfull thinges, death is moste dradfull, sayth a certayn Philosopher, of greate fame, but which had not herde that heavenly Philosopher, whyche hath taught us, not onely with wordes, but also with evydente examples, that a man perysheth not by death of body, but is drawn in sondre, and that the soule is ledd forth as it were out of a prison most paynful, into blessed reste: and the body also shall lyve agayne, to be partaker of the glory. He had not herde this principle of the spirite: Blessed be the deade, which dye in the lorde. He had not herde Paule lamentynnge and syghynge: I covet to be dissolved and be with Christ. And, Christ to me is lyfe, and deathe is lucre.⁷¹

The quotation here from book 3 of Aristotle's *Nichomachean Ethics* is also an allusion to the *Tractatus*, which begins with virtually the same words—"Though bodily deeth be moost dreedful of alle ferful thynges," in the *Craft of Dying* translation—although Erasmus quickly interrupts the train of thought to follow the soul's passage to rest, returning to the *Tractatus* script only after introducing one of the work's key themes (of a piece with a broad contemporary emphasis on *imitatio Christi*), the example of Christ. Even so, the passage contains two more allusions to the *Tractatus* opening, which has its own version of the *sententia* "the soule is ledd forth as it were out of a prison most paynful" (rendered "deeth is noo thyng elle but a goynge oute of pryson" in the *Craft* translation), attributing it to a "wyse man," and uses the same quotation from Revelation 14:13 ("Blessed be alle deed men that dyen in God," in the *Craft* translation).⁷² In the first half of

his treatise, Erasmus much extends the scope of the *Tractatus* “commendacyon of deeth”—which culminates in another verse cited here, Philippians 1:23 (“I desire & coveyte to be dede and to be with Cryst,” in the *Craft* translation)—but stays within its general structure.⁷³

As a whole, the *Preparation to Death* works to offer a consoling and spiritually positive understanding of death, and to impress on the reader that the good death is prepared for by living well according to Christian doctrine.⁷⁴ Yet as we saw is also true in Whitford’s *Daily Exercise*, in Erasmus’s thought world, consolation cannot in fact dispel the fear of dying. Despite his denial of Aristotle’s “death is moste dradfull” and the arguments the first half of his treatise adduces against the fear of death, the *Preparation to Death* in practice assumes that such fear is real and can only be negotiated with, not conquered. Erasmus indeed begins the treatise with the admission that, despite his profession of “al Christis philosophie,” he, too, fears death.⁷⁵ There are four “sundry sortis of deathe, a spirituall, a naturall, a transformatorie, and an eternall,” involving, respectively, severance of God from the mind, severance of the soul from the body, severance of the self from sin, and severance of the soul from heaven. Only the third of these, the “most happy deathe” of conversion, is redolent of anything but fear.⁷⁶ “The formes of deathe be innumerable,” he comments, “and amonge them some be horrible”; of all the “formes of tentations by which God trieth his men of warre ... the most grevous tentation of all is deathe.”⁷⁷ Where Whitford provides radical exercises designed to rid the self of fear, Erasmus keeps it in play, offering reflections, suggestions, critiques, and the practical strategies he outlines for the deathbed itself, but for the most part leaving readers with their fear of death, more richly understood but not alleviated.

Crucial to Erasmus’s approach throughout the work is his tendency to understand problems in naturalizing and moderating terms. Thus in approaching the matter of deathbed fear, he does notice the scruples of perfectionist Christians, “to whome if thou rehearse all maner comfortes, yet they fele a remorse & a gnawynge in their mynde, drawyng them to mystruste, & hereby they conjecture, that they be not yet allowed of god, bicause they never fele a quietnes of conscience,” like Luther before his Tower experience.⁷⁸ But rather than engaging with the serious theological issues the scrupulosity of such people evokes, he takes their qualms as merely temperamental, arguing that “agaynst these affections of nature we must fight with the strength of the spirite,” refusing to engage except in these terms.⁷⁹ The only similarly natural fear the treatise considers universal and urgent enough to be worth sustained attention, indeed, is the fear experienced by ordinary “weake soules” at the deathbed: the vast

majority, who fear dying because in their “lyfe was moche forgetfulnes, moche neglygence, moche ceassing, and brefely many mo evyl dedes than good dedes: and if there be any good dedes, they be spotted with moche rustynesse.” Such people are not very bad. Yet “whan their last day draweth nere,” they fear, “not bycause they be naughte & ungodly, but bycause they be humayne and going from the perfection.”⁸⁰ Again, the problem is a failure of moderation or balance. The too-vivid awareness of God’s perfection brought about by the deathbed creates a critical difficulty.

In counseling these middling Christians over the urgent care they require as the end of life approaches, Erasmus again builds closely on earlier traditions, reassuring readers that “no manne is to be despayred, so longe as the breth is in hym,” offering standard advice as to the need to keep from the deathbed any who may tempt the dying to carnal thoughts, counseling that “the ymage of the crucifixe” be “layde right agaynst” the eyes of the dying person,⁸¹ and calling for the attendants to select a qualified priest to be in attendance. This version of the “trewe preest” of *Visitation* E should be a figure of learning and rhetorical sophistication: “Furthermore it is their partes to gette for the sycke man suche a priest as hath a lernid tongue, that he may with his communicacion of wordes, susteyne and comforte the very sycke man, and whiche so can moderate his wordes, that neyther by over moch flatterie he deceyveth the sycke personne, nor by unseasonable austeritie and sharpnes he cast hym not into desperation. Nor breke not the broken staffe, nor quench not the smokyng flaxe. For in eyther behalf many men offende. Nor let them not rashely lette into the sycke man, all maner of pristres, but these onely, by whose speche he may be releved.”⁸² Like the *Preparation to Death* itself, the good priest’s counseling avoids doctrinal or moral rigorism, varying itself to the rapidly shifting needs of the occasion, in the same way the priestly user of the *Visitation* A chooses the parts of the text best suited to the moment.

In the normative context of the deathbed, where theology should give way to saving catechesis, doctrinal and moral rigorism indeed emerge from the text as explicitly satanic: part of the arsenal the devil brings to the deathbed to attempt to shake the dying from their faith in Christian doctrine. In describing this arsenal, Erasmus is expansive, abandoning the reticence of earlier death texts over the nature of the doubts and problems the dying face:

He maketh suggestion, how great the majeste and justice of god is, whiche so often hath bene neglected & defowled.... He tempteth also and assayeth the faythe of the man, to th’entent he myght doubt of the authoritie of scriptures, & of the artycles, which that the church hath taught us, promptyng into our myndes, the reasons of philosophers, and of heretykes,

and perplexe and doubtfull questions, of the creation and redemption of the worlde, of the immortalitye of soules, of the resurrection of bodyes, of Christe, whether he was trewe god and man, of the sacramentes of the church, what strength they have, of the prescience & predestination of god, wrastyng and wrything all thinges to distruste and desperation, depravinge also the testimonies of scriptures to the same purpose.⁸³

Such “doubtfull questions” are to be dismissed, following the strategy of the “rude and unlerned” man who submits to the faith of the church, saying “Abi retro Satana, Go backe Satanas. It is not lefull for me to doubte of tho thinges, which the churche, instructed by the holy goste, hath taught, and it is also sufficient to beleve tho thinges, which I can not attayne with my wytte.”⁸⁴

The strategy of moderation is also brought to bear on the sacraments. We saw in [Chapter 4](#) that the *Tractatus* is shaped in influential ways by an anxiety around how far the dying person’s attitudes at the moment of death decides his or her salvation, an anxiety that draws attention away from the efficacy of the sacramental aspects of the death rite and focuses on the presence in the dying person of an authentic attitude of contrition. Although the *Preparation to Death* as a whole is clearly sympathetic with this prioritization of the inward, as it arrives at the deathbed the work outlines a compromise position that values the sacraments of penance and unction but also assures readers that salvation can be attained in their absence at the last moment:

Oftentimes we se some persones soore troubled in their myndes, if they thynk that they shall departe without confession to the prieste, without receyving of the sacrament of the aultar, and the laste anneylynge. Yea and such maner of sayinges we here spoken of very many, he dyed lyke a christen man, he was foure tymes confessed before deth, and receyved all the rites of the churche. On the other syde, we take up our hande, and blesse us, if we here that any man dyed without them. This surely is a christen mans part, to wyshe, that he maye lacke none of the sacramentes. For they be great solacies and comfortes of the mynd, and helpynges of oure beleve, and it belongeth to the synceritie and purenes of a Christen man, to accomplyshe (yf he maye) all justice: But it apperteyneth more to a Christen manne to wyshe for faith and charitie, without which the other do nothings avayle. But by these outward thynges we ought not to juge any person, onles we certaynely knowe that they were omitted & not done, by contempt, or which is as yll, by negligence. Surely I doubte not, but that many neyther assoyled of the prest, nor their maker receyved, nor aneyled, nor yet buried, after the rytes of the churche, have gone to everlastynge joye and blys, where as some other, after all the ceremonies of the church solemnely done, and also buried in the churche next to the hyghe aultar, be caried downe to helle.⁸⁵

This careful passage, which moves in a very different way from the

Tractatus, with its quest for spiritual certainty, is a characteristic attempt on the work's part to have things both ways and a good example of its refusal to be perturbed by any specific difficulty. Such, in effect, is also the work's pastoral affirmation. In *Preparation to Death* there is always space for divine mercy as there is always space for human error. Ordinary Christians make their way fearfully, not always competently, but with adequately virtuous intent as "wayfarynge men" through the world, caring too much for "honours, pleasures, wyfe, children, kynsfolke, frendes, of beautie, youth, good helth, brefely of all kynde of commodities," until death calls them, when many, especially those who do not give way to doctrinal, moral, or ritual purism, find their way home.⁸⁶

While *Preparation to Death* represents Henry only indirectly, through Berthelet's imprint phrase "regii impressoris," and while we do not know who, Thomas Boleyn or someone else, had the work printed, the king's interests are served not only by the fact of publication of a prestigious new death text but by these general themes. Where Whitford is interventionist, offering lay readers of the *Daily Exercise* a system that ostensibly promises freedom from fear and attaches some of that fear directly to the state, building an inner fortitude that could be used to risk martyrdom, Erasmus promotes the more genial view that fear, albeit unphilosophical (since "Plato juged the hole philosophy, none other thyng but a meditation of deathe"),⁸⁷ is unavoidable, leaving the reader susceptible to its ordinary disciplinary deployment. Crucial to his stance as a Christian public intellectual is a cultivated openness: a reaching out toward the entirety of Christendom to depict death as experienced *generally*, outside the still nascent confessional identities that arise, the text implies, from giving way to the natural urgings of scrupulosity or the confusing questions of deathbed demons. Ordinary Christians, who ignore such temptations, do not aspire to theological particularity or the violent reformism that may go with it. Indeed, they need not aspire even to close identification with the Roman Church or the institution of monasticism. Usefully for the Henrician regime in 1538, and in strong contrast to Whitford's advocacy of quite similar practices, Erasmus is gently critical of dependance on the prayers of "Cartusians or friers observantes" on the part of the "sycke man," and harshly critical of last-minute deathbed requests to be buried as a Carthusian, or pay for masses to be said on one's behalf in Rome,⁸⁸ advocating reliance on the prayers of the church: that is, on the saints, angels, and mystical body of Christ on earth: "the holy church, the communion of sayntes."⁸⁹

Erasmus's deathbed-oriented account of the Christian faith, and of

an attitude to the faith philosophically and biblically learned but suspicious of theological, moral, and ritual rigidity, offers a great deal of room to a monarch and a religious system in a state of unpredictable upheaval. A vital function of death discourse as it represents the temporary arrangements of the secular world in the light of the transcendent is to reaffirm social hierarchy and political authority even as it tempers them by anticipating their final dissolution. Under the patronage of the king, *Preparation to Death* suggests that the compassionate, lucid, and controlling eloquence that Erasmus brings to the deathbed is monarchic as well as philosophical—governance, too, is “none other thyng but a meditation of deathe”—and renders almost tolerable the lethal means by which worldly governors conduct these meditations, appropriating for their own political use the bodily fear that underlies Aristotle’s “of all dradfull thinges, death is most dradfull.”

It is in this light that we might view one of Erasmus’s distinctive contributions to the *ars moriendi* tradition, his sustained focus on the problem of sudden death or *mors improvisa*. The relation between what can be seen (“outward thinges”) and the fate of the soul, a constant problem for earlier writers in the tradition, is of heightened urgency for Erasmus because of contemporary doctrinal debates in which the whole Christian community was engaged. From a doctrinal perspective, his stance is as we might expect, careful to support the desirability of the traditional “good death” but anxious, also, to endorse the validity of an act of last-minute contrition. Sudden death may be unavoidable, the Christian’s preparation may be imperfect, and the violent cause of death may overwhelm decorum. Fortitude, as Whitford seeks to inculcate it in the tradition of the *Tractatus*, is desirable. But it does not determine spiritual outcomes.

In listing the causes of death, however, in a remarkable passage, Erasmus argues that all forms of violent death, even those imposed by the state, are at least potentially morally neutral:

The formes of deathe be innumerable, and amonge them some be horrible, eyther in that they kyll sodeynly, which thing hapneth to some men even in the feasting, or in that they have sharpe and longe tormentes, as is the palsey, and the yschiae, or in that they have an abhominable syght, as they which choked up with tough ficum, waxe blacke: or in that they take awaye the use of the tongue, and the holenes of mynde, as the apoplexis, the phrensy, and certayne fevers, and other peculiar formes, whiche make men to tumble, and breake their neckes, or to leape into a welle, or strangle their throtes with some corde, or thrust them selfis into the guttes, with some knyfe or sworde.... But neyther by these thinges a man is not to be juged.... Howe be it tho kyndes of deth, which have a manyfest colour of wyckednes, is a good christen mans parte to desyre to escape, and to abhorre it. Contrary wise, somme we see have so gentyll a deathe, that they

seme to sleepe, and not to dye. But what facion of death so ever chaunceth, no man is therby to be estemed. No, not so moch as of them, whiche by the lawes are for their myscheivous dedes, put to execution, though they chaunce to have a shamefull dethe, we maye not judge temerously. For it may be, that he, whiche for treason, is hanged, drawen, and quartered, passeth into the company of aungelles, whereas annother, the whiche dyeng in a gray friers cote, and relygiously buried, departeth downe unto hell. It is the lorde, whiche jugeth of these thynges. By sundry wyse god exerciseth and purgeth his servantes: but (as I sayd) no evyl deth is that to be thought, which good life spent before. Otherwhyles, they that dye moste easily, go to everlastyng punyshmentes: and contrary wise, they that be myserably tourmented, flee into reste.⁹⁰

Even if to be “hanged, drawen, and quartered” belongs among the “kyndes of deth, which have a manyfest colour of wyckednes,” the spiritual state of the executed man cannot be judged by his “shamefull” and violent death, a death decreed by the legal apparatus of the secular state. Human judgment is fallible, human justice is not divine justice, and the manner of death—even of the apparently saintly death—thus gives us no necessary insight into the judgment of the “lorde.”

Besides reflecting a society in which the chances of a violent death were unusually high, and the reasons it might be incurred unusually varied, this passage at once naturalizes state violence, situating it under the sign of chance, not justice, and in the process relieves it of both the claim to correspond to divine justice and the burden of needing to represent itself in this way. One purpose of an *ars moriendi* is to comfort, and in the context of England in the late 1530s, the separation between outer and inner, the political or social and the spiritual, insisted on by this passage and the *Preparation to Death* as a whole might be taken to do this quite successfully. Published under the king’s imprint and bearing the name of his most recently disgraced minister, the work presumably intends to symbolize Henry’s spiritual care for his subjects, his interest in teaching them to die, not by judicial means but in the older sense that this phrase was applied to a household governor or pastor, responsible for the salvation of his subjects. At the same time, it separates his judicial role as head of state from his pastoral role as head of the church. Those who die at his hands (like Boleyn’s children, Anne and George) he does not thereby judge to be spiritually guilty, the work declares; nor is he himself vulnerable to the same judgement when he visits judicial violence on the good: “It is the lorde, whiche jugeth of these thynges.”

Especially if Boleyn was behind the project, Henry may have remained only dimly aware of the publication of Erasmus's *Preparation to Death*, which did not require anything of him to work on his behalf. But he is likely to have known of Berthelet's printing, four years earlier, of the work its title page describes as *A Compendious and a very fruteful treatyse, teachyng the waye of Dyenge well, written to a frende, by the flowre of lerned men of his tyme, Thomas Lupsete Londoner, late deceased, on whose soule Jesu have mercy*, one of a string of Lupset editions to issue from the royal press, beginning with *A Treatise of Charity* in 1533 and culminating in a collected *Tho. Lupsets workes* in 1546. Their author a popular figure who was only thirty-five when he died in the king's service in 1530 and still a rising star, this small group of instructional works from the last years of his life evidently bore repeated reprinting, for their reminder of the devout and humane learning associated with the Henrician court, for their practical value—one of the three main works is called *An exhortation to yonge men, perswadinge them to walke in the pathe way that leadeth to honeste and goodnes*—and for their obvious salubriousness.⁹¹

Churchman, humanist, and royal servant, Lupset is in some ways the quintessential Tudor intellectual.⁹² A son of a prosperous London citizen and member of the goldsmiths' guild—title pages regularly refer to him as *Londoner*—he was part of John Colet's household by 1508 and likely studied Greek and Latin at Colet's school at St. Paul's under William Lily. Having worked at Cambridge with Erasmus on his edition of the New Testament, Lupset made his reputation as a humanist intellectual abroad through his involvement in the print debate over the edition and at home through his oversight of the 1517 printing of Thomas Linacre's translation of Galen's *De sanitate tuenda* and Thomas More's *Utopia*. Erasmus worried over his asceticism. Many people exclaimed at his brilliance, intensity, charm, and good nature. Colet, his first patron, whom he deeply admired, left him a number of books in his will.

After lecturing at Corpus Christi College at Oxford, Lupset left his position before 1523 to study in Italy, with Thomas Starkey and Reginald Pole, traveling to Venice in the company of Richard Pace, Henry VIII's secretary and ambassador, where he was involved in the Aldine edition of the works of Galen. In 1528, he was in Paris as tutor to Thomas Winter, illegitimate son of Wolsey, having already worked as a tutor for Edmund Withypoll, the son of a London alderman, for whom (in the summer of 1529) he wrote the *Exhortation to Young Men*, and Christopher Smith, the son of Andrew Smith, an important London notary. He may have taken this job over from John Leland, who commemorated Lupset in a series of Latin verses. Late in 1529, he returned to Paris with Pole to lobby the theologians of the

university to pronounce in favor of Henry's divorce. Since Wolsey's fall was near, this was a sign both of the king's confidence in Lupset and, perhaps, of Lupset's sharp career instincts.⁹³ Starkey's controversial *Dialogue Between Pole and Lupset* may have been begun in Paris at this time, featuring imagined conversations between the two men.⁹⁴ Lupset's last work, *A Treatise of Dying Well*, addressed to a member of Pole's household, John Walker, was also written there late that year, and signed "At Paris the .x. day of Januarye," eleven months before Lupset's death of tuberculosis in London the following December.

Each of Lupset's three brief vernacular works, *A Treatise of Charity*, *An Exhortation to Young Men*, and *A Treatise of Dying Well*, teaches the same general message: that the good life—whether this be the life of charity to God and neighbor, of honesty and integrity, or of courage in the face of death, the respective topic of each work—requires detachment from passions, ambitions, and the love of worldly things.⁹⁵ Each work—even *A Treatise of Charity*, written for a "sister" who may be a nun—also assumes that the context of this message is the active life, fully engaged in the world on a personal and especially professional level. This consciously Senecan attitude to existence was shared by contemporary humanists across Europe, as it was by the group of devout but career-oriented Londoners clustered around John Carpenter, with his copies of Petrarch's *De remediis utriusque fortunae* and the pseudo-Senecan works of Martin of Braga.⁹⁶ The possibility that despite his international travels and connections Lupset may have been formed in part by a well-established local ethical tradition is suggested by the attribution to him of a popular London ascetic text, *The Gathered Counsels of Isidore*, in the 1546 collected edition of his works.⁹⁷ Indeed, although they reflect a different stance toward mortification and a very different social reality from earlier London ascetic works discussed in this book, all three of Lupset's surviving vernacular writings have occasional resonances with these works, from Hoccleve's *Series* onward.

The argument of *A Treatise of Dying Well*, in many ways more traditional than that of Erasmus's *Preparation to Death*, is that the reader must repudiate the fear of death and instead embrace a "gladnes of dyinge": "dienge well is in effecte to dye gladlye."⁹⁸ Even though we "here of dyinge wel or dying yvell, or of a good deathe or an yvel death,"⁹⁹ death is neither good nor bad in itself, although is natural to fear it, just as it is to love life, and hard indeed to be rid of this fear or this love. But humans, endowed with immortal souls, are more than natural and can overcome both proclivities by learning to live well, nourishing a proper attitude toward the pleasures of

temporal life, “nother to love the goodis of this world though we have them, nor to care for them, though we have them not.”¹⁰⁰ Such a detached, “spiritual” attitude, one that finds “swetenes in deathe,” is shown in the life of Christ, the saints, and the martyrs. It can also be seen in the day’s society—for you muste knowe, that a tayllour, a shomaker, a carpenter, a bote man, withoute bothe lernynge and orders, may be spirituall—just as the inverse, “temporall” attitude, one to which “nothyng semeth sweter than to lyve here,” is seen among the educated and those in religious orders.¹⁰¹ To attain a spiritual attitude by successfully repudiating fear is to “be oute of fortunes thraldome”: for “in hym the whiche is curious to lyve, fortune hath a great rule, but in hym that can dye gladdely, fortune hath no power.” Since “to be under fortunes vanitie” is “wrecchednes,” a life torn between “immoderate lustes of to moche welthe” and “passynge sorowes of to moche trouble,” to learn to “feare not deathe” is to learn “gladnes.”¹⁰² Apart from the language of “gladnes,” the structure of the argument is broadly that of Petrarch’s *De remediis*, another text that brings the ascetic to bear on the problem of living in the world.¹⁰³

As to how one obtains the “spirituall” attitude that is living well: to live well is to live with one’s treasure in heaven, not on earth, more mindful of the next world than of this. In order to live gladly, without fear of death, it is thus necessary to have death constantly in mind: “In my mynde, nothyng shalle further us more to a gladde deth, than shall an ordinate lyfe, that is to live in a just & a due maner after one rule & one forme, ever awake in a quicke remembrance of death, as though every houre were our last space of induraunce in this world. When you rise in the morning, determine so to passe the day folowing as though at nyght a grave shuld be your bed.”¹⁰⁴ Here, Lupset is close to a slightly earlier London death text, Thomas More’s *Last Things*, written in 1522 though not printed until the 1550s: a reflection on the biblical thema “Memorare novissima, et in aeternum non peccabis” (remember the last things and you will never sin: Ecclesiasticus 7:36), which offers a more intense form of the same lesson.¹⁰⁵ Lupset’s account of this death-centered habitus as “ordinate,” and especially his subsequent advice to avoid idleness—which he calls “the grave of lyvyng men ... the thyng, wherin life dyeth, and therby your soule is twyse buryed in you, ons in your bodye, next in your slothe”—is also similar to Whitford’s *Work for Householders*, which juxtaposes morning and evening meditation on death with its own warnings of the dangers of idleness.¹⁰⁶ By “contynuall remembraunce of death” the reader is prepared to “dye gladly with a good wyll” because this “remembraunce” is a crucial aid in maintaining “the clenes of a good conscience” and so remaining “in hope of the everlasting life,” “so that if you live wel, you shal dye wel.”¹⁰⁷

Only at the very end of the treatise, a discussion of the “continual prayer” that fortifies the soul against fear, do these elegantly circular generalizations arrive at their destination, in a passage that briefly turns its attention to the specific nature of the professional situation Lupset and his reader, Walker, share and the urgent incentive it creates for mindful, death-aware living: “The very praier is to be ever wel mynded, to be ever in charitie, to have ever the honour of good in remembrance, to suffre no rancore, none yre, no wrath, no malice, no syn to abyde in your delyte, but to be in a continual good thought ... & nevere paraventure you can pray better, than whan you must give your selfe to serve your maister, to whom the course of your life is due & bounden, specially when god hath given you suche a maister, whom your service can not plesse without you be studyous to plesse god. For wel you see, that withoute vertue your servyce were to your maister an unsavory thyng.”¹⁰⁸ Duly combined with “the sayinge of psalmes or axing with wordes of god his grace,” the “very praier” that is mindfulness of death, then, is willing service and the maintenance of the inner attitude, determinedly positive and free from the vehement passions, that enables such service. This is especially so—adds Lupset, whose hopes of further preferment were now also tied to the powerful Pole, only a few years from being made cardinal, and later briefly considered a possible claimant for the English throne—when “your maister” is himself a man of virtue.¹⁰⁹ If Petrarch’s *De remediis* is a book of death preparation for governors, which yokes virtuous practice, seen in Christian Senecan terms, to the exercise of rule, *A Treatise of Dying Well* is a book of death preparation for servants, which yokes virtue to the practice of professional subordination.

Lupset’s own relationship to professional subordination was complex. In Starkey’s *Dialogue*, he is made to argue that an active life of service to monarchs is superior to contemplation, when the monarch is as virtuous a figure as Henry.¹¹⁰ In *An Exhortation to Young Men*, he counsels Withypoll to control his own vehement passions, both in his professional dealings with “many and divers marchantis, amonge whom every one thynketh him self both lorde & mayster,” and in matters of religion, where he is to follow the “meke steppes of a trewe christen man,” not resisting “the consent of the churche” and leaving “common ceremonies and all olde customes alone.” That is, Withypoll must by no means join London’s growing cadre of evangelicals.¹¹¹ On the theological plane, in *A Treatise of Charity*, he follows the *Craft of Dying* and other London texts in praising the “fere of god” that arises from “reverence,” delighting to follow the “maisters pleasure,” while disparaging “the feare of vile bondsmen, the which ...

only loke upon the punishment.”¹¹²

Yet according to George Lily (William Lily’s son and another member of Pole’s circle), Lupset also wrote a dialogue critical of the laxity and profanity of the king’s household, never published and apparently burned in 1538 to prevent it falling into Cromwell’s hands.¹¹³ *An Exhortation to Young Men* begins with a sardonic account of Lupset’s impatience “waytynge on my lorde Cardinal, whose houres I must observe, to be alwaye at hand, lest I be called, whan I am not bye: the whiche shuld be streight taken for a faute of gret negligence.” Amid advertising of Lupset’s past and future projects, this work is full of implied complaints about his situation.¹¹⁴ As he counsels Withypoll on his dealings with merchants, Lupset adds, “It is a great grace in hym that feleth his harte agreved, & yet sheweth not outwardly his grefe,” calling this “grace” a “prudent dissimulation,” which “more avengeth his quarel, than any rendring of any wordes coude do.”¹¹⁵ Although his case against meddling with controversy equates reform with presumption, a sin into which Withypoll falls “when you grudge agaynste your rulers, though they be worthy of all disprayses” and incurs divine displeasure, his advice that Withypoll safeguard his soul “under the clooke of obedience” is suggestive of how much work “prudent dissimulation” has to do.¹¹⁶

An Exhortation to Young Men ends darkly: “Beleve you my counsayle, and, use the same, or els hereafter you will paradventure bewayle your negligence,” with a signature, “At More, a place of my lorde cardinals, in the feaste of saynte Barthlomew, 1529,” that links the terrible power of the king’s servant, Wolsey, and the terrible death of the apostle Barthlomew, flayed and crucified upside down.¹¹⁷ Its explicit logic is prudential. Yet in teaching Withypoll to put the soul before the body, *An Exhortation to Young Men* also claims to liberate him, in Christian Stoic style, from “the cruel handes of tyrantes,” even if he be “cast into tortures” or “rotte in fetters,” by securing for him a “spiryтуalle possession” in which “every man is an invincible emperour,” and from where he can “dispiise al violence of princes” and “al worldly chances.”¹¹⁸ For all its claim that there is only one “true path of living” for its adolescent reader to follow, the work offers advice for different futures, not all kept from disaster by “prudent dissimulation,” however assiduously practiced.¹¹⁹

Despite its own prudential account of good living as faithful and cheerful service, and despite the optimistic portrayal of faithful and cheerful service with which it ends, *A Treatise of Dying Well* also prepares the reader for starkly different futures. Given a good master, such as Pole, living mindful of death may help the servant to avoid certain kinds of death, since it encourages him to provide exactly this

kind of loyal service. Yet the urgency of the need to spend each day in death meditation suggests limited efficacy of contemplation as a prudential practice. Although at the outset of his treatise, Lupset invokes “the monke of the Charter house” as the expert on death meditation, the goal of death meditation in *A Treatise of Dying Well* is significantly different from that of the Carthusian, or from the ascetic lay Londoners who imitated the Carthusian.¹²⁰ Despite its connection to the practice of philosophy, death meditation is here not initially a route to spiritual perfection but has three more severely practical agendas. First, it attempts to protect the body, by inculcating an obedient virtue that keeps the servant’s passions in check, in order to avoid being speedily and violently judged by one’s “maister.” Second, it attempts to protect the soul, fully engaged in the active life, from entanglements that could bring about its damnation in a situation in which violent death still remains an open possibility. Third, and in the context of the *ars moriendi* most novel, it attempts to prepare the servant to behave in a publicly appropriate way in the event of a violent death. Rather like Whitford’s *Daily Exercise*, but for different reasons, it attempts, simply, to build the servant’s physical and moral courage.

Lupset figures this third agenda through the *exempla* that illustrate the work’s arguments, which develop a sustained series of depictions of state violence, drawn from pagan antiquity, hagiography, and recent history. Drawing on Seneca’s *De tranquillitate animi* (Of the tranquility of the soul), the *exordium* of the work gives a vivid account, retold like a romance, of the death of the noble Canius, executed on charges of secret conspiracy against “the tyrant Caligula Cesar”:¹²¹ “This Canius beside his hye lernyng was a man of a great spirite, the whiche he wel declared in the maner of taking his death. It chanced hym to falle out for a certayne cause with the sayde tyrant, and many sore words were between them: at the laste ... this emperour in his fierse ire sayde: Well thou fole, make mery if thou wylt, for I have pointed the within few dayes to be slayne. Therat Canius turned him with lowe courtesy and sayd: My most gentill prince I hartely thanke you.”¹²² A scholar with a “noble stomacke,” Canius in his brave answer “shewed the made ragis of the cruell tyrant to be so ferre intolerable,” comparing his sentence to an invitation to “a good tourney.”

The philosopher’s insouciance extends to the death day itself, when the “kings geyler & hangmanne” find Canius at his house “playing atte the chestes,” where he calls them to witness before he goes that “I have one man in this game more than my felowe hath.” Deflecting Caligula’s desire to make visible his political power in and through the broken body of his subject, Canius’s refusal to show fear is specifically

framed as a means of subverting unjust political power: “In this wyse this philosopher playde with deathe, and shortly his quiete harte gave a foule checke mate to the tyrantes crueltie: he shewed hym selfe to be in spirite as farre above all kynges violente power, as these myghtye princes thynke to have a stronge dominion over all theyr subjectes.”¹²³ Unsure as he is “whether the soul be mortall or immortalle,” Canius even uses his death to learn “the trouthe of this harde question,” finding “occasion of lernynge” to the last moment.¹²⁴

In later exempla, Lupset evokes the fearlessness of Christian martyrs in the face of the “incredyble paynes of flayinge with hookes theyr skyn from the fleshe, of scrapynge with tyle stones the fleshe from the bones ... of infynite straunge and newe devyses for payne.”¹²⁵ But his fascination is with pagans who die as political martyrs, such as “Theodore the philosopher,” who answered “a tyrante” who “fierselye thretened ... that he shoulde dye, and that his bodye shoulde lye to crowes unburyed” with the cutting response: “Thou mayste be prowde of thy power, by cause of one ounce or two of bloudde is in thy handes. And as for the burialle of my bodye, O howe folyshe thou arte, if thou reken it to be any dyfference, whether I rote under or above the grounde.”¹²⁶ This privileging of the non-Christian might be understood simply as a corollary of Lupset’s humanistic study and translation of classical texts. But it also serves to represent the good death as a matter of political, even more than religious, significance: a fearful public event, closely tied to the fragile life of court service in which both author and reader participated.

Lupset’s concern with public death in the political arena becomes abundantly clear when he moves to an example of a despicable death, from which one can learn what not to do when facing one’s mortality. This example of a political *mors improvisa* is another secret conspirator, smuggled into the text as part of a transition from the exordium to the first argument heading (what is dying well?). Unlike Canius, however, this figure is an English contemporary:

by a short processe you shall see, whether the sayde Canius be more worthy of prayse for his lyttell regardyng the deedly punyshement than is Frances Phillipe, that within fewe yeres passed was put to execution with us for treason, the whiche dyed so cowardelye, in soo greatte panges of feare, that he semed extracte from his wittes: scante for quaking and trymblyng the wreche could speke one word. The fewe wordes that he coulde with moche stutternge sownde, were only in the declaration of his dispayre, nor nothyng was sene nor harde of hym, but wepyng, lamentyng, wryngyng of his handes, with bannynge the houre and day of his byrthe, contynually sighinge, as thoughe his harte shulde have burste for sorrowe.¹²⁷

Francis Phillip held the post of schoolmaster to the king’s

“henchmen,” young nobles brought up in the king’s household, a position similar to the one Lupset occupied in Wolsey’s household, and the two might have known each other—Lupset likely did know Phillip’s successor, Robert Whittington, a controversial figure among London humanists.¹²⁸ According to the Londoner Edward Hall’s *Union of the Two Noble and Illustre Families of Lancastre and Yorke* or *Hall’s Chronicle*, first published by Berthelet in 1542, Phillip was among a group executed at Tyburn for treason on February 11, 1524, on a perhaps implausible charge of conspiracy to rob the king’s subsidy collectors and use the money to raise a force to seize Kenilworth Castle.¹²⁹

Lupset’s frightened disgust with Phillip’s cowardly death pinpoints Phillip’s inability to deliver more than a “stutternge sownde” by way of a gallows speech: a far cry from Canius’s trenchant wit and stylish display of Senecan indifference that, for Lupset, must testify to real moral corruption on Phillip’s part and thus confirm the king’s justice. This political fantasy—that a regime’s moral worth is manifest in the kinds of deaths of its condemned subjects—later leads Lupset to venture the hypothesis that the onlooker can “conjecture the state and condition of the soule” “by the maner of hym that dyeth.” Phillip’s terror thus perhaps suggests that he died “in the daunger of goddis curse” as well as the king’s: a theological position denied by Erasmus and others that suggests the extraordinary moral pressure Lupset is willing to bring to bear on himself and others in contemplating participating in this public, political version of the good death.¹³⁰

Executions carried out by the judicial system are thus by far the most preoccupying form of death throughout *A Treatise of Dying Well*, which evokes them as an all-pervasive danger with claustrophobic intensity: “Moreover in as moche no labour, wyt, craft, nor diligence prevayleth to escape dethe, no power, no ryches, no auctoritie helpeth, but all ... must folowe the traynge of deathe, no corner can hyde us, no walles can defende us, no waye nor meane, no intreatie, no prayer, no suite, nothyng under heven can kepe us from deathes hande.”¹³¹ In evoking the “lusty courage” needed to face this “desperate” situation “manfully,” and not to refuse to face it either in imagination or in fact, Lupset indeed imagines the whole of humanity as a long line of the condemned, all awaiting their turn with the hangman’s axe: “What nowe John? dothe not he seme unto you a shamefull cowarde, and a fearefull wretche, a playn kikkes without an harte, that with moche intercession, with many prayers desyrethe a lyttelle delaye of deathe? If you sawe one stande in the numbere of many that shoulde be hedded, makynge most instant suit to the hangman, that he might be the last that shulde put his heed to the blocke, wolde you not say, fye upon such a wretched knave, that so

moche feareth deathe, beynge nowe at the poynt to dye, whether he wylle or no? and yet this maner nowe is with us all.”¹³² Such a “fantasye” still resonates even in the language of Lupset’s conclusion, where Walker is to “give your selfe to serve your maister, to whom the course of your life is due & bounden,” and in this way practice the continual prayer that is virtuous death-mindfulness. In order “to be ever wel mynded ... to have ever the honour of good in remembrance, to suffre no rancore ... but to be in a continual good thought” in the condition of ambitious servitude in which men like Lupset and Walker found themselves, *Treatise of Dying Well* suggests it was necessary to practice a mode of death preparation more stringent even than the one advocated by Whitford.¹³³

It was almost five years after Lupset died at his mother’s house and was buried in the churchyard of St. Alphage within Cripplegate before the executions of monks and lay brothers from the London Charterhouse began, over their refusal to acquiesce to the king’s new role as supreme head of the English church, making good in an unexpected, but theologically fitting, way the ascetic injunctions written in Latin over their cell doors.¹³⁴ Perhaps, however, Lupset’s invocation of “the monke of the Charter house” at the outset of his treatise is more revealing of the work’s attitude to its own simultaneous injunction to defiance and to servility than it first appears. Although he remains reserved about his own identification with the Christian martyrs, it does seem as though he, too, contains the fear of state execution by aligning the life of court service and the violent deaths to which it can give rise with a version of spiritual perfection.

Conclusion: Thomas More’s *The Last Things*

For nothyng is there that maye more effectuallye withdrawe the soule fro the wretched affections of the body, than may the remembrance of death, yf we do not remember it hourelly, as one heareth a worde, and let it passe by hys eare, without any receiving of the sentence into his heart. But if we not onely here this word death, but also let sink into our heartes the very fantasye and depe imaginacion therof, we shall parceive therby that we wer never so gretly moved by the beholding of the daunce of death pictured in Poules, as we shal fele our self stered and altered by the feling of that imaginacion in our hertes. And no marvell. For those pictures expresse only þe lothely figure of our dead bony bodies biten away þe flesh. Which though it be ougly to behold, yet neither the sight therof, nor the sight of al ye dead heades in ye charnel house, nor the apparicion of a very ghost, is halfe so grisely as the depe conceived fantasy of deathe in his nature, by the lively imaginacyon graven in thyne owne heart. For there seest thou, not one plain grievous sight of the bare bones hanging by the sinewes, but

thou seest (yf thou fantasye thyne own death, for so art thou by this counsell advised) – thou seest, I saye, thy selfe yf thou dye no worse death, yet at the leastwise lying in thy bedde, thy hed shooting, thy backe akynge, thy vaynes beating, thine heart panting, thy throte ratelyng, thy fleshe trembling, thy mouth gaping, thy nose sharping, thy legges coling, thy fingers fimbling, thy breath shorting, all thy strength fainting, thy lyfe vanishing, and thy death drawyng on.¹³⁵

As he advises his readers to remember their last hour, *Memorare nouissima*, in the first main section of *The Last Things*, perhaps written for his daughter, Margaret, More invokes two widely dispersed death genres of very different date: the “signs of the end” and the dance of death. Alluding to what may have been a common London mortification practice of “beholding of the daunce of death pictured in Poules,” More affirms the superior spiritual benefit of a second, very much older, exercise, meditating on the signs of death, closely imitating the vocabulary and the assonances of a genre that goes back at least to the thirteenth century:

Whan thi hed quakyth, *memento*
Whan thi lyppys blakyth [grow pale], *confessio*
Whan thi nose scharpeth, *contricio*
Whan thi lymmys starker, *satisfaccio*
Whan this brest panteth, *nosce te ipsum*
Whan thi wynde wantyth, *miserere*
Whan thi eyne fylmyn, *libera me domine*
Whan deth folowyth, *venite ad iudicium*.¹³⁶

More lightly updates this exercise by locating his claim for its special merits within a fifteenth-century terminology of “fantasy” and “imagination,” but its tenor remains the same. Just as often in his great tribulation treatise, *The Dialogue of Comfort*, written thirteen years later in the face of his coming execution, he reverts to the reassurance of known forms.

As we have seen, the reassurance of known forms is under special strain in the Henrician death texts published in the 1530s, which are under pressure not only from new levels of physical fear itself but from a fundamental disjuncture between the jurisdictions that had long, in principle, functioned in concert at the deathbed, where one died, ideally, at harmony with self, neighbor, and both the earthly and the heavenly *civitas*. This possibility has not perhaps quite disappeared: dying at the king’s hands while professing continuing loyalty is an imaginative possibility in all three death texts I have discussed, and was commonly practiced, not least because obedience to the sovereign remained a powerful spiritual imperative. But for the present it has become more difficult to imagine dying in such

harmony, and the novelty of the meditative practices laid out in Whitford's *Daily Exercise* and the copious attention to the oratorical in Erasmus's and Lupset's treatises, all of which are in pursuit of a place of affective and rational rest that is nowhere to be found, are the result.

State executions for a variety of political and religious reasons continued to be a preoccupation of moral writers and pamphleteers throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, as Peter Lake has richly shown. Nonetheless, the death texts of the 1530s cannot be usefully understood as representing the epochal shift in attitudes to living and dying, away from the affective gloom of the Christian toward the rationalistic clarity of the neoclassical that is sometimes attributed to them. Not only is their blend of Christian teaching and philosophical neoclassicism integral to the late medieval *ars moriendi* tradition, as we have seen, their very real novelty is less a sign that they are reaching out toward a transformed, humanist future than that they are focused with urgent localism on the present.

Conclusion

This book has presented a new understanding of the meanings of late medieval death culture in England and the city of London in particular by situating a series of artes moriendi within the socially layered, devout, but also worldly elite lay milieu in which they played a vital role. Reading these artes moriendi within the contexts of the books, institutions, and religious beliefs and movements with which they were associated, and linking them when possible to known individuals and communities, I have tracked the asymmetric but persistent link between the changing literary and ritual forms of death texts on the one hand and the practice of urban government and self-government on the other. Late medieval and early modern ethical systems often articulate ideas about virtuous secular behavior through the language of responsibility to self and others, obediently following the “order of charity.” As they teach their medieval users how to exercise such responsibility with rational and compassionate care at the verge of the *hora mortis* and urge them to live in the knowledge that this hour is always potentially now, the artes moriendi offer their modern readers a powerful lens through which to view the possibilities for ethical behavior available to devout lay Londoners, and the material, political, and doctrinal forces that shaped these possibilities across the six generations covered in this book.

Although I have traveled to Gloucestershire, Paris, Constance, Vienna, and Wittenberg when the discussion warranted it, and although the mobility of the texts, books, and people treated here means that this has been fairly often, my focus on fifteenth-century London and Londoners has for the most part been kept deliberately close. This is a book about nodes more than about networks,¹ most interested in the complex imbrication of ethical texts and practices surrounding dying within a particular, well-documented milieu, and how these changed, while retaining an intimate family resemblance, across time. Despite this close focus, however, one of the engines driving this analysis is the remarkable capacity of the ars moriendi—once we discard all the tired generalizations about the morbidity and decadence of late medieval death discourse—to connect cultural fields that are often taken as separate. The ars moriendi is itself essentially a bridging genre, its most urgent function to make smooth the passage

between life and death, affirming continuity in the face of personal catastrophe and rupture. In closing, it is worth briefly reflecting on how it can function for us as another kind of bridge, between three pairs of standard scholarly categories—public and private, religious and secular, medieval and early modern—each of which has been under pressure for some time but which can still constrain in ways I suggest are damaging to our practice as literary critics and cultural historians.

Public and Private

Two contrasting models of late medieval lay religiosity have dominated the field of Middle English studies for the past twenty-five years. The first is communal in emphasis and orientation, centered around the notion of Corpus Christi and what Eamon Duffy has called the “traditional” religion of parish life, or else around the programs of ecclesiastical and social reform we associate especially with John Wyclif.² The second is privatized and individual, centered on exercises such as affective meditation on Christ’s passion, whose absorption into lay devotion from enclosed religious practice during the late fourteenth century and fifteenth century is often understood as an index of late medieval laicization.³ Death discourse, as I represent it here, creates a conceptual bridge between these models. Like the exemplary voices of Boethius, Job, and the Psalmist who speak through the fifteenth-century literature of complaint, death discourse offers its lay audience what David Lawton aptly calls “public resources for interiority,” ways of shaping the self with the authority and capaciousness to be shared by entire textual and believing communities.⁴ It does this as the expression of a culture in which relations between public and private, collective and individual, differ significantly from those of surrounding periods and our own.

Scholars often understand late medieval affective piety as a mode that emphasizes compassion and love to the exclusion of other emotions. It is this assumption that causes affectivity to be equated with the individualistic devotionism of a work like Nicholas Love’s *Mirror of the Blessed Life of Jesu Christ*, and makes it possible to argue that affective devotion was a private discourse, appropriated by lay people seeking to further their personal spiritual aspirations. But death meditation—the imaginative, experiential anticipation of one’s own death, or that of another—is a vital component of affective piety, and this form of affectivity is deeply implicated in collective social praxis. As we have seen, a particular signature of fifteenth-century death texts is their interest in evoking and managing fear, in order to

elicit empathetic recognition of personal mortality in meditation on the death of oneself and of others and in the process create a distinctively affective experience of Christian community.

To take one last example, this signature is visible in the *Sermon of Dead Men*—a well-known early fifteenth-century text from one of late medieval England's other great cities, Bristol—as it enjoins its hearers to imagine themselves in their crowded tenement homes with someone dying on the other side of the thin wall of their rooms.⁵ After they have first listened to the man's "sighing, grynting, and groning," then entered his room in order to witness the "bolnyng of his brest and betyng of his armys" as he enters the death agony, they are instructed through simile to reflect on what the dying man is experiencing as his soul is plucked from his body: "If it might be so that a tre, whiche hathe many rotis, were plauntid inne at thy mouthe into thy body, and the prinsepal rote set in thy herte, and in every lime of thy body sette oon of the rotis; if it so were then that this tre, by gret violence, shulde be pullid oute at thy mouthe at ones, reson techith that this shulde be a passing peine. Right so farith it at mannes deeth. The lif shal be pullid oute sodeinly, al at ones, oute of his body, which prinsipaly is rotid in his herte, and also in alle his other parties. Then mote this nedis be a passing grete peine."⁶ These visceral images of mortality, figured in the death of a neighbor, have to be apprehended in affective meditation by individual hearers. Yet their force, setting, and tenor remain profoundly social. Written in part to defend the legitimacy of communal gatherings at a moment when they were under political threat, *Sermon of Dead Men* enjoins its lay audience not to dwell on this vicarious experience of their own death that they have just imaginatively experienced, but rather to reaffirm their solidarity with one another, the living as well as the dead: "Lifte up youre hertis then, with one herte and one soule knyttid so fast with the bondis of charite that alle the feendis of helle shullen never more dissever hem."⁷ Cultivated private emotion becomes an occasion for the formation of a specifically corporate body.

Such medieval images of empathetic deathbed communities, founded in the negation of the individual, even now have cultural valence. Enthralling thinkers such as Walter Benjamin—whose 1936 essay "Der Erzähler" (The Storyteller) offers one of the most loving of the many modern evocations of the medieval deathbed, "turned into a throne toward which the people press through the wide-open doors of the death house"⁸—they provide a founding paradigm for contemporary theories of palliative care and "good death" movements and represent an alternative popular conception of late medieval death to Johan Huizinga's morbidity thesis.⁹ Yet not all the deathbed communities described in this book affirm the communitarian

ideology of the “even-cristen.” In Hoccleve’s *Series*—as, in a more complex sense, in the *Book of the Craft of Dying*—death preparation involves turning one’s back on the social world in order to join an invisible community of those converted individuals who aspire to a more rigorous and self-directed path to salvation than the ordinary parish Christian. Toward the end of my period, as civic solidarity, under intense political pressure from the late fifteenth century on, gives ground to the violent reorderings of Henrician England, religious solidarity also starts to give ground to the anxious elitism associated with the formation of elect, small-group religious identities.

Religious and Secular

If the *ars moriendi* offers us tools for thinking about how late medieval people understood their ethical identities within a series of overlapping or competing religious structures, it also offers us the promise of greater integration between the study of religion and that of secular literature and culture. This has remained an area of difficulty in fifteenth-century literary studies even after the powerful synthetic account of the period provided a decade ago by James Simpson, who situates his analysis within two capacious categories of which I have also made frequent use here, jurisdiction and reform.¹⁰ To put this point crudely, one important line of recent work on the fifteenth century, as exemplified by Maura Nolan’s *John Lydgate and the Making of Public Culture* or Paul Strohm’s *Politique*, understands the most vital energies of the period as generated by secular politics and neoclassical aesthetics, while another, exemplified by Vincent Gillespie and Kantik Ghosh’s recent edited collection, *After Arundel*, relates them to the continuing process of religious reform, instruction, and devotion.¹¹

Death discourse has a tightly conjoined double focus on the body, seen at the moment of its final dissolution, and the soul, whose departure from the body to be gathered “into the artifice of eternity” begins this process.¹² It draws on the equally tightly conjoined traditions of classical and neoclassical Stoicism and Christian consolation discourse in order to maintain this focus. Death is a natural, secular event with powerful real-world implications for the living; death is a portal to a supernatural realm, with powerful spiritual implications for everyone, living and dead.

This is why death can at once be a leveler, since all share in it, and still be central to an ethical system organized around the reaffirmation of diversified and unequal social identities. More specifically, it is why the devotional and aesthetic practices associated with dying offered

such effective tools to London's citizen elites, governors, and bureaucrats in their efforts to fuse emergent ideals of lay Christian community with their plans for the city and their entrenched and hierarchic understanding of its social relationships. In the imagination of the city as a mortality community in the St. Paul's *Dance of Death* wall panels we have seen how Death comes to all with equal eagerness, but in the process also how finely attuned Death remains to the nuance of social degree—how subtly he urges the requirement that members of each estate or professional group prepare for his coming in an appropriate fashion, especially through unremitting work. A message for all Londoners, devised by John Carpenter and his colleagues at the Guildhall, this vivid imagining of the spiritual dimensions of the secular and the secular dimensions of the spiritual was assumed to be equally relevant to its producers. Carpenter's will leaves his junior colleagues books that also contain versions of this message; the *famulus* or servant who is his alter ego in the *Daunce of Poulys* affirms his submission to the same stern ethical regime.

Despite its doctrinal diversity, late medieval death culture as a whole is shot through with a related tension between empathetic witness and community in death on the one hand and the buttressing of the existing social order on the other. Any account of its theological and pastoral shaping that overemphasizes either at the expense of the other, like any account of fifteenth-century public culture that neglects the interpenetration of theology and politics, is too simple—as the many vulnerabilities on simultaneous display in Sir John Manningham's will perhaps most poignantly remind us. The close congruence between the social and the theological evidenced in the *Daunce of Poulys* is again particular to its cultural moment, and the book tracks its rise and partial fall over a period of less than a hundred years. Nonetheless, the intimately doubled nature of death discourse is far from disappearing with the arrival of the sixteenth century and its new political and theological regimes. On the contrary, for Richard Whitford and Thomas Lupset contemplating the terrifying unpredictability of religious and court life in the late 1520s and 1530s, the need to learn to die well even on the scaffold, holding this death continually in mind, required both monks and courtiers to yoke the secular and the sacred, the exigencies of public performance and the hope of salvation, more stringently than ever.

Medieval and Early Modern

The final bridge this study of late medieval *artes moriendi* offers is, of course, across the scholarly period divide between medieval and early

modern. In this, the book joins the chorus of new work that seeks to articulate a more sophisticated account of how different aspects of English thought and culture were affected by the tumultuous events of the early sixteenth century, including the Reformation.¹³ Like many other studies, this book shuttles between the language of continuity or development and that of change or rupture. Indeed, the necessary tension between these two ways of interpreting history is already there in my account of the earliest vernacular *ars moriendi*, the late fourteenth-century *Visitation of the Sick*, whose translation and adaptation of two existing Latin sources could be looked at through either lens; it is there, too, in my account of the early fifteenth-century *Book of the Craft of Dying*, a work whose version of the deathbed is startlingly different from those in the two *Visitation* texts but still reflects the same preoccupations and draws on closely related source materials.

Partly because it has been so important to this project to give as finegrained an account of change and variance in death discourse across the long fifteenth century as possible, a major concern in articulating the larger arguments of the book has been to secure the evidence for continuity, especially at moments when evidence for rupture seems strongest and narratives of rupture are best established. The sudden rush of new death texts written during the 1520s and 1530s—which include not only the works I discuss in [Chapter 5](#) but also *Of the Preparation to the Crosse and to Death* ascribed to Richard Tracy, Thomas More’s *Dialogue of Comfort*, and John Fisher’s *A Spiritual Consolation*—is itself a sign of the violent changes associated with this difficult period, and tempts one to absolute statements about shifts and breaks that need, as I suggest, to be resisted. After all, to take a single example, the inward turn and focus on human agency and the role of reason in securing salvation found in the writings of sixteenth-century Christian humanists such as Erasmus (and repudiated in the later work of Luther and other evangelicals) is a feature of the vernacular *ars moriendi* from the moment of its emergence as a distinct genre, whose roots go back much further, through the humanism of the early twelfth century here associated with Baudri of Bourgeil to the very beginnings of Christian death culture.

My study has to end somewhere and in fact ends abruptly, *in media res*, a decade before the theological developments associated with the Reformation began the process of transforming England’s theology and rituals associated with sickness and dying. This process begins to be reflected in the elaborated version of the rituals found in the 1540 edition of the Sarum rite. It is completed in the two official evangelical vernacular prayer books produced during the reign of

Edward VI, the second of which, from 1559, dramatically simplifies the sacramental aspects of the rite and eliminates prayers for the dead. Suppressed during the reign of Mary, the 1559 prayer book was readopted under Elizabeth and remains the key source of the 1662 *Book of Common Prayer*.¹⁴ Despite the momentous changes this prayer book represents, however, even if we push the discussion forward to the later sixteenth-century evangelical artes moriendi such as Thomas Becon's popular *The Sicke Man's Salve*, published soon after the 1559 prayer book, we find the same tension between change and continuity still in operation.

Inside its rather scanty humanist clothing—the work is a dialogue whose speakers carry Greek names—*The Sicke Man's Salve* is in many ways a traditional death text, grounded in the “charitable ... dede” that it is “to visite the sicke and to comfort the diseased” in order to help him to a “paciēt hart” and a “a quiet & contented mind” before death.¹⁵ The learned deathbed witness Philomon's response to the dying Epaphroditus's fear that his “repentance and conversion is to late” and that he has “greevously offended the Lord my God” echoes the assurance offered more than a century before in the *Craft of Dying*: “There is no repentance and conversion to late in this world so that it be true and procedeth from a contrite hart, & humble spirit,” as Philomon puts it. Only in the location of the particular anxiety voiced in this ars moriendi—whether Epaphroditus is “of the number of those whome God hath predestinate to be saved”—does the strong note of evangelical novelty sound. Whereas the fifteenth-century ars moriendi is transfixed in deadly fascination by the complexity of individual psychic processes and the part they play in human salvation, in *The Sicke Man's Salve* the mystery is located outside the realm of the human, in the inscrutable actions of God and his divine will. In this regard, the two texts do seem to stare at one another across a rupture: both need to understand the theology of the other as anathema, representing a fundamental danger to the spiritual prospects of the user. Yet this is not to efface either the family likeness between the two texts or the fact that they are in difficult conversation with one another: predestination hovers in the background of all fifteenth-century artes moriendi; like other English versions of the *Tractatus de arte moriendi*, the *Craft of Dying* may still have been in use when *The Sicke Men's Salve* was written. Once we can set aside the stereotyping of periods that still surrounds discussion of the medieval–early modern divide, and in whose construction the ars moriendi has played a considerable part, perhaps this difficult conversation can resume.

NOTES

INTRODUCTION

1. No full-length study of the late medieval *ars moriendi* in England has been published since Mary Catharine O'Connor's *The Art of Dying Well: The Development of the Ars moriendi* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1942) and Nancy Lee Beaty's anthology of death texts, *The Craft of Dying: A Study in the Literary Tradition of the Ars moriendi in England* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1970). The theme of death in medieval English literature has been better served: see, for example, Takami Matsuda, *Death and Purgatory in Middle English Didactic Poetry* (Woodbridge, Suffolk: D. S. Brewer, 1997); Jane Gilbert, *Living Death in Medieval French and English Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011); Ashby Kinch, *Imago Mortis: Mediating Images of Death in Late Medieval Culture*, Visualising the Middle Ages 9 (Leiden: Brill, 2013); Danielle Westerhof, *Death and the Noble Body in Medieval England* (Woodbridge, England: Boydell, 2008); and Kenneth Rooney, *Mortality and Imagination: The Life of the Dead in Medieval English Literature*, Disputatio 12 (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 2011). See also D. Vance Smith, *Arts of Possession: The Middle English Household Imaginary* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003), esp. chapters 2 and 6. For recent work on death and mortality by art historians and social historians, see note 6. The relative paucity of work on the *ars moriendi* in England is in sharp contrast to scholarship on the German tradition, which is substantial; most work there builds on Rainer Rudolf's *Ars moriendi: Von der Kunst des Heilsamen Lebens und Sterbens*, Forschungen Zur Volkskunde 39 (Cologne: Böhlau, 1957).

2. Eamon Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England, 1400–1580*, 2nd ed. (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2005). Two long chapters of Duffy's study are devoted to medieval death culture: 229–376.

3. Phillipe Ariès, *The Hour of Our Death*, trans. Helen Weaver (New York: Knopf, 1981).

4. Johan Huizinga, *Herfsttij der Middeleeuwen: Studie over levens-en gedachtenvormen der veertiende en vijftiende eeuw in Frankrijk en de Nederlanden* (Haarlem: H. D. Tjeenk Willink, 1919), trans. Rodney J. Payton and Ulrich Mammitzsch as the *Autumn of the Middle Ages* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996).

5. Such assumptions lie behind, for example, David William Atkinson, *The English Ars moriendi*, Renaissance and Baroque 5 (New York: Peter Lang, 1992); and Austra Reinis, *Reforming the Art of Dying: The Ars moriendi in the German Reformation (1519–1528)*, St Andrews Studies in Reformation History (Aldershot, England: Ashgate, 2007).

6. For art historical studies see Paul Binski, *Medieval Death: Ritual and Representation* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1996); Elina Gertsman, *The Dance of Death in the Middle Ages: Image, Text, Performance*, Studies in the Visual Cultures of the Middle Ages 3 (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 2010); and Sophie Oosterwijk, “Fro Paris to Inglond”? The Danse Macabre in Text and Image in Late-Medieval England” (Ph.D. diss., Leiden University, 2009). For work on death culture

by social historians, see the essays in Caroline Barron and Clive Burgess, eds., *Memory and Commemoration in Medieval England: Proceedings of the 2008 Harlaxton Symposium*, Harlaxton Medieval Studies 20 (Donington: Shaun Tyas, 2010); Judith Middleton-Stewart, *Inward Purity and Outward Splendour: Death and Remembrance in the Deanery of Dunwich, Suffolk, 1370–1547* (Woodbridge, England: Boydell and Centre of East Anglian Studies, 2001); Christopher Daniell, *Death and Burial in Medieval England, 1066–1550* (London: Routledge, 1997); Vanessa Harding, *The Dead and the Living in Paris and London, 1500–1670* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002); essays in Steven Bassett, ed., *Death in Towns: Urban Responses to the Dying and the Dead, 1000–1600* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1992); and Katherine L. French, *The Good Women of the Parish: Gender and Religion After the Black Death* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008), chapter 2.

7. Sarah Beckwith, *Christ's Body: Identity, Culture, and Society in Late Medieval Writings* (London: Routledge, 1993).

8. I build especially on the foundational work on fifteenth-century London political and social history by Caroline Barron, as will be clear throughout this book.

9. See C. David Benson, *The History of Troy in Middle English Literature: Guido delle Colonne's "Historia destructionis Troiae" in Medieval England* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1980); and, more recently, Sylvia Federico, *New Troy: Fantasies of Empire in the Late Middle Ages*, *Medieval Cultures* 36 (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003).

10. James Simpson, *The Oxford English Literary History*, vol. 2, 1350–1547: *Reform and Cultural Revolution* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).

11. Simpson, *Reform and Cultural Revolution*, 55.

12. For a survey of medieval commentaries on Aristotle's *Politics*, see Jean Dunbabin, "The Reception and Interpretation of Aristotle's *Politics*," in *The Cambridge History of Later Medieval Philosophy*, ed. Norman Kretzmann, Anthony Kenny, and Jan Pinburg (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 723–37. The first full vernacular translation of the *Politics* was made by Nicole Oresme in the 1370s. For an edition, see Maistre Nicole Oresme, *Le Livre de politiques d'Aristote*, ed. Albert Douglas Menut, *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society* n.s. 60, part 6 (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1970); for context, see Claire Richter Sherman, *Imaging Aristotle: Verbal and Visual Representation in Fourteenth-Century France* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995). For other relevant studies, see Gianluca Briguglia and Thomas Ricklin, eds., *Thinking Politics in the Vernacular from the Middle Ages to the Renaissance* (Fribourg: Academic Press, 2011).

13. John Trevisa, "The Governance of Kings and Princes": *John Trevisa's Middle English Translation of the "De regimine principum" of Aegidius Romanus*, ed. David C. Fowler, Charles F. Briggs, and Paul G. Remley (New York: Garland, 1997–), Book 1, part 1, chapter 2 (page 7, lines 38–8.2).

14. Trevisa, "Governance of Kings," 2.1.6 (168.12–15).

15. Sarah Rees Jones, "The Household and English Urban Government in the Later Middle Ages," in *The Household in Late Medieval Cities: Italy and Northwestern Europe Compared*, ed. Myriam Carlier and Tim Soens (Leuven: Garant, 2001), 71–87, at 73. See also Caroline M. Barron, "The Wards of Medieval London," in *Law, Laity, and Solidarities: Essays in Honour of Susan Reynolds*, edited by Pauline Stafford, Janet L. Nelson, and Jane Martindale (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2001), 218–34.

16. On "frankpledge," see Rees Jones, "Household," 74–82. For recent work on the late medieval urban household, see Chapter 1 below.

17. Shannon McSheffrey, "Men and Masculinity in Late Medieval London Civic Culture: Governance, Patriarchy and Reputation," in *Conflicted Identities and Multiple*

Masculinities: Men in the Medieval West, ed. Jacqueline Murray (New York: Garland, 1999), 243–78.

18. Felicity Riddy, “Looking Closely: Authority and Intimacy in the Late Medieval Urban Home,” in *Gendering the Master Narrative: Women and Power in the Middle Ages*, ed. Mary Carpenter Erler and Maryanne Kowaleski (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2003), 212–28.

19. Giovanni Boccaccio, *The Decameron*, trans. and ed. Mark Musa and Peter E. Bondanella (New York: Norton, 1977); Geoffrey Chaucer, “The Pardoner’s Tale,” in *The Riverside Chaucer*, ed. Larry Dean Benson and F. N. Robinson, 3rd ed. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1987); William Langland, *Piers Plowman: A Parallel-Text Edition of the A, B, C and Z Versions*, ed. A. V. C. Schmidt, 2 vols. (London: Longman, 1995; reprint, Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications and Western Michigan University, 2008), B passus 20. On the *Danse macabre*, see Chapter 2 below.

20. Julian of Norwich, *The Writings of Julian of Norwich: “A Vision Showed to a Devout Woman” and “A Revelation of Love,”* ed. Nicholas Watson and Jacqueline Jenkins (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2006), from *A Vision*, section 2.

21. William J. Dohar, *The Black Death and Pastoral Leadership: The Diocese of Hereford in the Fourteenth Century* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1995); for a succinct account of the wealth of the city after the Black Death, see Derek Keene, “Material London in Time and Space,” in *Material London, ca. 1600*, ed. Lena Cowen Orlin (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2000).

22. John Donne, *Death’s Duel, 1632* (Menston, England: Scholar Press, 1969); and Jeremy Taylor, *Holy Living and Holy Dying*, ed. P. G. Stanwood (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989).

23. Drew Gilpin Faust, *This Republic of Suffering: Death and the American Civil War* (New York: Vintage Books, 2009).

24. James W. Green, *Beyond the Good Death: The Anthropology of Modern Dying* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008).

25. Anne Hudson, *The Premature Reformation: Wycliffite Texts and Lollard History* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988).

26. On versions of “orthodox reform” in the fifteenth century, see several of the essays in Vincent Gillespie and Kantik Ghosh, eds., *After Arundel: Religious Writing in Fifteenth-Century England* (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 2011), especially Gillespie’s “Chichele’s Church: Vernacular Theology in England After Thomas Arundel” (3–42); and Sheila Lindenbaum, “London After Arundel: Learned Rectors and the Strategies of Orthodox Reform” (187–208).

27. Lindenbaum, “London After Arundel.”

28. Rosemary Horrox, “The Urban Gentry in the Fifteenth Century,” in *Towns and Townspeople in the Fifteenth Century*, ed. J. A. F. Thomson (Gloucester: Sutton, 1988), 22–44.

29. David Lawton, “Voice After Arundel,” in Gillespie and Ghosh, 133–52, at 140.

30. Desiderius Erasmus, *A Preparation to Deathe* (1538), Short Title Catalogue 10505, f. Aii.

CHAPTER 1. SPIRITUAL GOVERNANCE AND THE LAY HOUSEHOLD

1. Thomas Wimbledon, *Wimbledon’s Sermon: Redde rationem villicationis tue: A Middle English Sermon of the Fourteenth Century*, ed. Ione Kemp Knight Duquesne Studies, Philological Series, 9 (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1967), lines 560–75 (Knight’s edition is cited here and in the text as “Wimbledon’s Sermon”).

Knight's critical edition is based on the late fourteenth-century text in Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 357, also used for Nancy H. Owen's single-manuscript edition, "Thomas Wimbeldon's Sermon: 'Redde rationem villicacionis tue,'" *Mediaeval Studies* 28 (1966): 176–97.

2. For issues surrounding the date of composition and delivery, see Nancy H. Owen, "Thomas Wimbeldon," *Mediaeval Studies* 24 (1962): 377–81; "Wimbeldon's Sermon," 41–45; and Alan H. Fletcher, *Preaching, Politics and Poetry in Late-Medieval England* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1998), 208.

3. "Wimbeldon's Sermon," lines 6, 38–39, 49, 52, 55, 79–80.

4. "Wimbeldon's Sermon," lines 82–84.

5. "Wimbeldon's Sermon," lines 125, 146–47.

6. "Wimbeldon's Sermon," lines 234–35, 310, 404, 481.

7. "Wimbeldon's Sermon," lines 755–56.

8. "Wimbeldon's Sermon," lines 897–98, 837, 841. The last passage immediately retreats from the specificity of its claim, but in identifying the possible date of judgment as "þe fourtenþe hundred 3eer fro þe birþe of Crist" (line 896), it helps solidify the date of the sermon. On the radical (and non-Wyclif-fite) nature of this reference, see Kathryn Kerby-Fulton, *Books Under Suspicion: Censorship and Tolerance of Revelatory Writing in Late Medieval England* (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 2006), 42 and 79.

9. "Wimbeldon's Sermon," lines 1021–26.

10. "Wimbeldon's Sermon," lines 758–60.

11. Alexandra Walsham, "Inventing the Lollard Past: The Afterlife of a Medieval Sermon in Early Modern England," *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 58 (2007): 628–55, at 641. See also her appendix, 654–55, a list of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century editions of the sermon.

12. See the classic study of this period by Ruth Bird, *The Turbulent London of Richard II* (London: Longmans, Green, 1949); see also Caroline Barron, *London in the Later Middle Ages: Government and People, 1200–1500* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), especially chapters 1, 2, and 7; Sheila Lindenbaum, "London Texts and Literate Practice," in *The Cambridge History of Medieval English Literature*, ed. David Wallace (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 284–310, 284–91; and Marion Turner, *Chaucerian Conflict: Languages of Antagonism in Late Fourteenth-Century London* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007). Four years after Wimbeldon's sermon, Richard II again accused the city governors of unspecified "notable and evident defaults in the government and rule of the city of London" (R. R. Sharpe, ed., *Calendar of Letter-Books of the City of London: Letter-Book H, 1375–1399* [London: J. E. Francis, 1907], 379).

13. On poverty and preaching in northern Europe, see James D. Mixson, *Poverty's Proprietors: Ownership and Mortal Sin at the Origins of the Observant Movement* (Leiden: Brill, 2009). For *Piers Plowman*, see William Langland, *Piers Plowman: A Parallel-Text Edition of the A, B, C and Z Versions*, ed. A. V. C. Schmidt, 2 vols. (London: Longman, 1995; reprint, Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications and Western Michigan University, 2008), vol. 1, B prol. 122. The C version of the poem is almost contemporary with "Wimbeldon's Sermon" and reflects contemporary conditions in London; for the C text and its contexts, see the essays gathered in Steven Justice and Kathryn Kerby-Fulton, eds., *Written Work: Langland, Labor, and Authorship* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1997).

14. "Wimbeldon's Sermon," lines 437–40.

15. The most current list of manuscripts is in Walsham, "Inventing the Lollard Past," 628–29, note 1. For fuller accounts of individual manuscripts, see the relevant entries in Veronica O'Mara and Suzanne Paul, *A Repertorium of Middle English Prose Sermons*, 4 vols., Sermo 1 (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 2007).

16. For the term “household miscellany,” see Amanda Moss, “A Merchant’s Tales: A London Fifteenth-Century Household Miscellany,” *Yearbook of English Studies* 33 (2003): 156–69, “‘Þat þine opun dedis be a trewe book’: Reading Around Arundel’s Constitutions,” in *After Arundel, Religious Writing in Fifteenth-Century England*, ed. Vincent Gillespie and Kantik Ghosh (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 2011), 395–411, and “Context and Construction: The Nature of Vernacular Piety in a Fifteenth-Century Devotional Anthology,” in *Vernacularity in England and Wales, c. 1300–1550*, ed. Elizabeth Salter and Helen Wicker (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 2011), 41–64, all studies of Westminster 3. See also Felicity Riddy, *Sir Thomas Malory* (Leiden: Brill, 1987), 17–30; Malcolm Parkes, “The Literacy of the Laity,” in *Literature and Western Civilization: The Medieval World*, ed. David Daiches and Anthony Thorlby (London: Aldus, 1973), 555–77; and Phillipa Hardman, “Domestic Learning and Teaching: Investigating Evidence For the Role of ‘Household Miscellanies’ in Late-Medieval England,” in *Women and Writing, c. 1340–1650: The Domestication of Print Culture*, ed. Anne Lawrence-Mathers and Phillipa Hardman (Woodbridge, England: Boydell and Brewer, 2010), 15–34.

17. See Ralph Hanna, “The Origins and Production of Westminster School MS. 3,” in *Pursuing History: Middle English Manuscripts and Their Texts* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1996), 35–47.

18. Besides several essays in Gillespie and Ghosh, *After Arundel*, see, e.g., Margaret Connolly, “Books for the ‘helpe of euery persoon þat þenkþ to be saued’: Six Devotional Anthologies from Fifteenth-Century London,” *Yearbook of English Studies* 33 (2003): 170–81; Jill Havens, “Shading the Grey Area: Determining Heresy in Middle English Texts,” in *Text and Controversy from Wyclif to Bale: Essays in Honour of Anne Hudson*, ed. Helen Barr and Ann M. Hutchison (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 2005), 337–52; and Fiona Somerset, “Wycliffite Spirituality” in Barr and Hutchinson, *Text and Controversy*, 375–86; as well as the essays by Moss cited in note 16 above and Hanna, “Origins.” The interests and terms of this recent work are much informed by Nicholas Watson’s influential article “Censorship and Cultural Change in Late-Medieval England: Vernacular Theology, the Oxford Translation Debate, and Arundel’s Constitutions of 1409,” *Speculum* 70, no. 4 (1995): 822–64.

19. Stephen Kelly and Ryan Perry, “Devotional Cosmopolitanism in Fifteenth-Century England,” in Gillespie and Ghosh, *After Arundel*, 363–80.

20. Vincent Gillespie, “Chichele’s Church: Vernacular Theology in England After Thomas Arundel,” in Gillespie and Ghosh, *After Arundel*, 3–42.

21. See Mary Raschko, “Common Ground for Contrasting Ideologies: The Texts and Contexts of ‘A Schort Reule of Lif,’” *Viator* 40 (2009): 387–410, with edition at 408–10, lines 52, 55, 59.

22. See Wendy Scase, “Reginald Pecock, John Carpenter and John Colop’s ‘Common-Profit’ Books: Aspects of Book Ownership and Circulation in Fifteenth-Century London,” *Medium Ævum* 61, no. 2 (1992): 261–74, at 267. On the possible role of Westminster MS 3, see Moss, “Merchant’s Tales”; and Hanna, “Origins,” 46–47.

23. On Bodley 938, see Kelly and Perry, “Devotional Cosmopolitanism,” 366; on University College 97, see Jeremy Catto, “Sir William Beauchamp: Between Chivalry and Lollardy,” in *The Ideals and Practice of Medieval Knighthood III: Papers from the Fourth Strawberry Hill Conference, 1988*, ed. Christopher Harper-Bill and Ruth Harvey (Woodbridge, England: Boydell, 1990), 39–48.

24. On the political and economic climate of fifteenth-century London, see Barron, *London in the Middle Ages*, 9–42; Sheila Lindenbaum, “London After Arundel: Learned Rectors and the Strategies of Orthodox Reform,” in Gillespie and Ghosh, *After Arundel*, 187–208; and Anne Sutton, *The Mercery of London: Trade, Goods and People, 1130–1578* (Aldershot, England: Ashgate, 2005), 161–200; and on civic

building programs in the early fifteenth century, see Derek Keene, "Civic Institutions," in *Gothic: Art for England, 1400–1547*, ed. Richard Marks and Paul Williamson (London: Victoria and Albert Museum, 2003), 262–64; and Barron, *London in the Middle Ages*, 54–55.

25. "Wimbledon's Sermon," lines 602–3.

26. See Watson, "Censorship and Cultural Change."

27. Anne Hudson, *The Premature Reformation: Wycliffite Texts and Lollard History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), esp. chapters 8 and 9.

28. "Wimbledon's Sermon," lines 238, 241–43, 348–50.

29. Westminster 3, f. 118v (see also Hanna, "Westminster School 3," 36). The text is also in Edinburgh, University Library MS 93 and (incomplete) in Cambridge, University Library MS Hh.1.3.

30. Robert Kinpoitner, "An Edition of *De visitacione infirmorum*" (Ph.D. diss., Fordham University, 1974), used here for quotations from *Visitation* A. Kinpoitner transcribes *Visitation* E from a Cambridge manuscript, but I have preferred the more accessible transcription from University College 97 in Carl Horstmann, ed., *Yorkshire Writers: Richard Rolle of Hampole, an English Father of the Church, and His Followers*, 2 vols. (London: Swan Sonnenschein, 1895–96), 2.449–53, in quoting from the work here. A partial collation of six of the surviving manuscripts suggests that the work circulated in relatively stable form, although a critical edition remains desirable. For a brief account of the work in the context of University College 97, see Havens, "Shading the Grey Area," at 347–49.

31. For earlier vernacular texts that deal in more general terms with death and dying, see the Introduction. One such text, the death meditation sequence in Laurent d'Orléans's *Somme le roi*, translated into English as "The Tower of All Towers," is briefly discussed in Chapter 3 below.

32. On the mortality of priests in the Black Death and its impact on pastoral care, with reference specifically to Herefordshire, see William J. Dohar, *The Black Death and Pastoral Leadership: The Diocese of Hereford in the Fourteenth Century* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1995), as well as his more condensed discussion in "'Since the Pestilence Time': Pastoral Care in the Later Middle Ages," in *A History of Pastoral Care*, ed. G. R. Evans (London: Cassell, 2000), 169–200.

33. See the discussion of the *ars moriendi* printed by Caxton in Chapter 4.

34. Julian of Norwich, *A Vision Showed to a Devout Woman*, in *The Writings of Julian of Norwich*, ed. Nicholas Watson and Jacqueline Jenkins (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2006), 6.1. On Julian's use of the communitarian vocabulary of contemporary death discourse, see Amy Appleford, "The 'Comene Course of Prayer': Julian of Norwich and Late Medieval Death Culture," *Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 107, no. 2 (2008): 190–214.

35. Schort Reule, in Raschko, "Common Ground," line 87.

36. Walter Hilton, *Walter Hilton's Mixed Life: Edited from Lambeth Palace MS 472*, ed. S. J. Ogilvie-Thomson (Salzburg: Institut für Anglistik und Amerikanistik, Universität Salzburg, 1986).

37. On the medieval English history of the occasional offices, including the ritual for the dying, see William Maskell, *Monumenta ritualia ecclesiae Anglicanae*, vol. 1 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1882), ccxxxvi–ccclvi; for a general study, see Richard William Pfaff, *The Liturgy in Medieval England: A History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009). On the early history of the Latin death ritual in a European-wide context, see Frederick Paxton, *Christianizing Death: The Creation of a Ritual Process in Early Medieval Europe* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1990).

38. Old English rubrics appear in the Latin office for the sick in Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 422 ("The Red Book of Darley"); Oxford, Bodleian Library

Laud Miscellaneous MS 482; and the so-called Missal of Robert of Jumièges (Rouen, France, Rouen Bibliothèque municipale MS Y.6). Some of these vernacular rubrics have been printed in Bernard Fehr, "Altenglische Ritualtext für Krankenbesuch, heilige Ölung und Bergräbnis," in *Texte und Forschungen zur englischen Kulturgeschichte: Festgabe für Felix Libermann*, ed. Heinrich Boehmer et al. (Halle: Niemeyer, 1921), 20–67; see also R. I. Page, "Old English Liturgical Rubrics in Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, MS 422," *Anglia* 96 (1978): 149–58; and Timothy Graham, "The Old English Liturgical Directions in Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, MS 422," *Anglia* 111 (1993): 439–46. On the use of Old English in these and the occasional offices more generally, see Helen Gittos, "Evidence for the Liturgy," in *Pastoral Care in Late Anglo-Saxon English*, ed. Francesca Tinti (Woodbridge, England: Boydell, 2005), 63–82. Victoria Thompson's *Dying and Death in Later Anglo-Saxon England* (Woodbridge, England: Boydell, 2004) is a full-length study of Laud Miscellaneous MS 482.

39. David Dumville, *Liturgy and the Ecclesiastical History of Late Anglo-Saxon England* (Woodbridge, England: Boydell, 1992), 131–32. For the use of the vernacular in the *Ordo* prayers and exhortations in Laud Miscellaneous 482, see Thompson, *Dying and Death*, chapter 3.

40. The phrase "casual bilingualism" is Sarah Kelly's, describing the use of the vernacular in pre-Conquest English leases. See her "Anglo-Saxon Lay Society and the Written Word," in *The Uses of Literacy in Early Medieval Europe*, ed. Rosamond McKitterick (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 36–62, at 50.

41. Ruth Dean lists no Anglo-Norman manuscripts containing French versions of the rite: see her *Anglo-Norman Literature: A Guide to Texts and Manuscripts* (London: Anglo-Norman Text Society, 1999).

42. Mechthild Gretsch, "Winchester Vocabulary and Standard Old English: The Vernacular in Late Anglo-Saxon England," *Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library of Manchester* 83, no. 1 (2001): 41–87; Dumville also argues that in the eleventh century, "the vernacular was nibbling at the margins of the liturgy and was poised to assume a more substantial role in liturgical books" (*Liturgy and the Ecclesiastical History*, 132).

43. For a description and an updated list of manuscripts of the *Visitation of the Sick*, see Robert Raymo, "Works of Religious and Philosophical Instruction," chapter 20 of *A Manual of the Writings in Middle English, 1050–1500*, ed. Albert E. Hartung, 11 vols. (New Haven, Conn.: Connecticut Academy of Arts and Sciences, 1986), 7.2255–378, 2470–582, at 2360–61 and 2565–66. Although I keep the monikers "A" and "E" for convenience, I depart here from Raymo's list of *Visitation of the Sick* manuscripts and versions. Raymo, for the most part following Kinpoitner, "Edition of *De visitacione*," lists twenty-eight manuscripts and six versions. However, only two of these versions, A and E, are directly related to one another. B and F, D, and C, as listed by Raymo, are independent translations of one or both of the two Latin texts used to construct the *Visitation*: Anselm's *Admonitio morienti* in the case of B and F, the *De visitacione infirmorum* in the case of D, and both texts in combination in the case of C (see below). One further *Visitation* manuscript should be added to Raymo's list: the Welsh and Middle English Aberystwyth, National Library of Wales, Peniarth MS 12, a priest's book, where *Visitation* A appears on the eight-folio parchment binding: see C. W. Marx, "An Abbreviated Middle English Prose Translation of the *Elucidarium*," *Leeds Studies in English*, n. s. 31 (2000): 1–53, at 3 and note 18.

44. Version A survives in Oxford, St. John's College MS 47 (early fifteenth century); Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Ashmole 750 (later fifteenth century); Cambridge, University Library MS Ee.5.13 (late fourteenth century); Cambridge, Gonville and Caius College MS 209/115 (mid-fifteenth century); London, British Library Harley MS 237 (mid-fifteenth century); and Peniarth 12 (still in use in the

late sixteenth century). A seventh manuscript was at Balliol College, Oxford into the eighteenth century, its copy of the last part of the rite surviving in a transcription by the antiquarian Thomas Hearne, in *The Works of Thomas Hearne M.A.*, ed. Samuel Bagster, 2 vols. (London: Mercier and Chervet, 1810), 2.683–84. Gonville and Caius College 209 is also typical of the clerical contents of most *Visitation A* manuscripts: the contents of the book are all in Latin, except for the Middle English *Visitation A*, which immediately follows the *Ordo ad visitandum infirmum* and associated offices from the Sarum Use, and include an order for administering the sacraments and other services, with music and another mass, also with music. See M. R. James, *A Descriptive Catalogue of the Manuscripts in the Library of Gonville and Caius College*, 2 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1907–8), 1.244.

45. For a brief overview of earlier death texts, see Rainer Rudolf, *Ars moriendi: Von der Kunst des Heilsamen Lebens und Sterbens*, *Forschungen zur Volkskunde* 39 (Cologne: Böhlau, 1957), 11–13.

46. Jean-Yves Tilliette, *Baudri de Bourgueil: Poèmes*, 2 vols. (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1998), 1.xl. Baudri was abbot by 1089, archbishop by 1107. The ascription to Baudri is in a single thirteenth-century manuscript, now London, Lambeth Palace MS 363 (1.x); Tilliette accepts the ascription both because it seems well informed in its specificity and on the more specific grounds of “des rapprochements stylistiques avec les poèmes,” which “ne laissent aucun doute à ce sujet” (1.xi). The addressee of the *De visitacione*, which probably dates from Baudri’s later years as archbishop, may have been “Arnaldus clericus Baudrici archiepiscopi nepos,” named in charters of 1107 and 1123 (1.vi). The most complete account of Baudri’s life remains Henri Pasquier, *Un Poete latin du XIe siècle: Baudri, Abbe de Bourgueil, archeveque de Dol, 1046–1130* (Paris: Thorin, 1878). This identification has not previously been noticed by scholars of the Middle English *Visitation of the Sick*, a work apparently unknown to Tilliette. The attribution in the Lambeth MS is noticed in the edition of the works of Baudri in Jacques-Paul Migne, ed., *Patrologia Latina*, 221 vols. (Paris, 1844–64), 166.211; and by N. R. Ker, with I. C. Cunningham and A. G. Watson, *Medieval Manuscripts in British Libraries*, 5 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969–2002), 2.733, a description of Eton College MS 120.

47. Winthrop Wetherbee, “From Late Antiquity to the Twelfth Century,” chapter 5 of *The Cambridge History of Literary Criticism*, vol. 2, *The Middle Ages*, ed. Alastair Minnis and Ian Johnson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 99–144, at 129. Neoclassicism was not Baudri’s only literary preoccupation. Both his best-known poem, an epistle to Adela, Countess of Blois, which may shed light on the dating of the Bayeux Tapestry, and his best-known prose piece, an account of Pope Urban II’s summoning of the First Crusade in 1095 called *Historia hierosolymitana*, show his engagement with contemporary historical events. For a translation of the poem to Adela, with introduction, see Monika Otter, “Baudri of Bourgueil, ‘To Countess Adela,’” *Journal of Medieval Latin* 11 (2001): 60–141; see also Shirley Ann Brown and Michael W. Herren, “The *Adelae Comitissae* of Baudri of Bourgueil and the Bayeux Tapestry,” *Anglo-Norman Studies* 16 (1993): 55–73. For Baudri’s *Historia hierosolymitana*, see Conor Kostick, *The Social Structure of the First Crusade* (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 52–65.

48. “In muro civitatis supernae apponendus es lapis vivus, in cujus aedificio non auditur strepitus aut malleus. Hic perferendus est strepitus.” I quote from the only modern edition of *De visitacione infirmorum*, in Migne, *Patrologia Latina*, 40.1149.

49. “Hic adjiciendus est lapidi malleus, hic conterendum est totum lapidis quadrandi supervacaneum” (Migne, *Patrologia Latina*, 40.1149).

50. Migne, *Patrologia Latina*, 40.1149–52.

51. As Gerald Bond has remarked regarding Baudri’s other epistolary works, “whether poetry or prose, medieval letters were much more public than their

modern equivalents. Baudri sometimes sent them by private messenger ... but more often by a fellow monk or traveling stranger who routinely read them to various audiences before they reached their destination.” Gerald Bond, *The Loving Subject: Desire, Eloquence, and Power in Romanesque France* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1995), 48. See also C. Stephen Jaeger, *The Envy of Angels: Cathedral Schools and Social Ideas in Medieval Europe* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2000). On the epistolary genre in the period more generally, see Giles Constable, *Letters and Letter-Collections*, *Typologie des sources du Moyen Age occidental* 17 (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 1976).

52. Migne, *Patrologia Latina*, 40.1151–58.

53. The library of Syon Abbey alone had six copies: see Vincent Gillespie, ed., *Syon Abbey*, *Corpus of British Medieval Library Catalogues* 9 (London: British Library and British Academy, 2009), listing on 708. Although the work’s circulation remained partly monastic, *De visitacione infirmorum* appears to have been of special interest to houses involved in pastoral care and practical theology. For example, the great Benedictine house of St. Augustine’s Canterbury owned several complete and partial copies: see B. C. Barker-Benfield, ed., *St. Augustine’s Abbey, Canterbury*, *Corpus of British Medieval Library Catalogues* 13 (London: British Library and British Academy, 2008); and Richard Sharpe et al., eds., *English Benedictine Libraries: The Shorter Catalogues*, *Corpus of British Medieval Library Catalogues* 4 (London: British Library and British Academy, 1996). Two of the St. Augustine’s Canterbury copies were the property of Michael of Northgate (fl. 1340), who translated the influential late thirteenth-century pastoral manual *Somme le roi* into Kentish as the *Ayenbite of Inwit* for the layfolk of Canterbury: see the introduction to Pamela Gradon, ed., *Dan Michel’s “Ayenbite of Inwyt,” or, “Remorse of Conscience,”* 2 vols., EETS OS 23 and 278 (London: Oxford University Press, 1965); and Barker-Benfield, *St. Augustine’s Abbey, Canterbury*, items 1.375.3 and 1.782.a. By the fourteenth century the work was in circulation in other, pastorally oriented institutional contexts and it continues to appear in fifteenth-century booklists. Cambridge libraries, including the library at Peterhouse College, oriented especially toward the education of priests, possessed four copies of the work. The *De visitacione* was also a favorite in houses of the Augustinian canons, for whom pastoral care was a staple religious duty: see Peter D. Clarke, ed., *The University and College Libraries of Cambridge*, *Corpus of British Medieval Library Catalogues* 10 (London: British Library and British Academy, 2002), items UC 2.45q, UC 3.100, UC 48.27i, and UC 48.101x; and Teresa Webber and Andrew G. Watson, eds., *The Libraries of the Augustinian Canons*, *Corpus of British Medieval Library Catalogues* 6 (London: British Library and British Academy, 1998), items A20.225ad, A20.225aq, A20.228a, A20.231, A20.233, A20.244g, and A20.861j. I have not attempted to count surviving copies not listed in medieval manuscript catalogues.

54. These are Kinpoitner and Raymo’s versions C and D (see note 43), which survive, respectively, in London, British Library Harley MS 2383; and Oxford, Bodleian Library MS 2643, and Cambridge, University Library MS I.i.6.55; all three MSS date from the first half of the fifteenth century.

55. Rudolf, *Ars moriendi*, 60, lists ten fourteenth-century German manuscript copies of the work.

56. A brief version of the questions appears twice in the early twelfth-century manuscript London, Lambeth Palace MS 59, a collection of Anselm’s letters and other miscellaneous writings attributed to him gathered and copied by an unknown member of his circle at Christ Church Priory, Canterbury, in the years immediately after his death. See Anselm, *Admonitio morienti*, in *Memorials of St. Anselm*, ed. R. W. Southern and F. S. Schmitt (London: published for British Academy by Oxford University Press, 1969), 352–54. The more extended version from which the

vernacular translations derive is found among the works of Anselm in Migne, *Patrologia Latina*, 158.685–88.

57. For circulation, see Rudolf, *Ars moriendi*, 57–59. For the *Tractatus*, see Chapter 4.

58. On Harley MS 2253, see Susanna Fein, ed., *Studies in the Harley Manuscript: The Scribes, Contents, and Social Contexts of British Library MS Harley 2253* (Kalamazoo, Mich.: published for TEAMS in Association with the University of Rochester by Medieval Institute Publications, 2000).

59. These are Kinpoitner and Raymo's versions B and F (see note 43).

60. John Mirk, *John Mirk's Instructions for Parish Priests*, ed. Gillis Kristensson (Lund: Gleerup, 1974), lines 1713–24; and John Audelay, *Poems and Carols: Oxford, Bodleian Library Ms Douce 302*, ed. Susanna Fein (Kalamazoo, MI: published for TEAMS in Association with the University of Rochester by Medieval Institute Publications, 2009), 93–103, a poem entitled *De visitacione infirmorum et consolacione miserorum* that claims to be a translation of a treatise from "Saynt Ancelyne, that holé bischop" (line 1). The poem, part of Audelay's compendium *The Counsel of Conscience*, is a series of deathbed commonplaces in practice as indebted to the *Ordo* and, perhaps, the *De visitacione infirmorum*, as to the Anselm questions.

61. See Chapter 4.

62. The differences can best be tracked in the appendix to George Henderson's edition of the York rite, *Manuale et processionale ad usum insignis ecclesiae Eboracensis*, vol. 1, Surtees Society 63 (Durham: Andrews, 1875), which includes an edition of the Sarum rite, based partly on the printed edition of 1540, partly on St. John's MS 47, whose copy of *Visitation* A Kinpoitner uses as his base manuscript. In citing the *Ordo*, I follow Henderson's transcription of the St. John's version of the rite. Page numbers are preceded by an asterisk.

63. Psalms 6, 31, 37, 50, 101, 129, 142, with the antiphon "Ne reminiscaris Domine delicta nostra, vel parentum nostrorum: neque vindictam sumas de peccatis nostris" (Remember not, O Lord, our offenses, nor those of our forefathers; neither take thou vengeance on our sins). Mirk, *Instructions for Parish Priests*, lines 307–9.

64. "Pax huic domui et omnibus habitantibus in ea: pax ingredientibus et egredientibus"; "Exaudi nos, omnipotens et misericors Deus, et visitationem tuam conferre dignare super hunc famulum tuum, N., quem diversa vexat infirmitas. Visita eum, Domine, sicut visitare dignatus es socrum Petri (Matt 8:14–17), puerumque centurionis (Matt 8:5–13), et Tobiam et Saram per sanctum angelum tuum Raphaellem (Tobit 3:17). Restitue in eo, Domine, pristinam sanitatem: ut mereatur in atrio domus tuae dicere, Castigans castigavit me Dominus, et morti non tradidit me (Psalm 117:18). Salvator mundi, Qui cum Deo Patre, et Spiritu sancto vivis et regnas Deus. Per omnia saecula saeculum." (Hear us, almighty and merciful God, and deign to confer your own visitation upon this member of your family, N., who diverse infirmity vexes. Visit him, O Lord, as you deigned to visit Peter's mother in law, the centurion's boy, and Tobias and Sara through your holy angel Raphael. Restore in him, O Lord, his first health; so that he may be worthy to say in the hallway of your house, *Chastising, the Lord chastised me, and did not draw me into death*. Savior of the world, who with the Father and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns, God, for ever and ever, Amen.). Henderson, *Manuale*, 1.*44, *45.

65. Julian, *Vision Showed to a Devout Woman*, 2.22–23. Julian's priest seems to be paraphrasing something similar to the rubric found in later versions of the Sarum rite (not in St. John's 47): "offerenda est ei imago crucifixi et ante conspectum ejus statuenda: ut redemptorem suum in imagine crucifixi adoret, et passionies ejus quam pro peccatorum salute sustinuit, recordetur." Henderson, *Manuale*, 1.*44.

66. "Profiscere anima Christiana de hoc mundo: in nomine Dei Patris omnipotentis qui te creavit. Amen. In nomine Jesus Christi Filii ejus, qui pro te

passus est. Amen. In nomine Spiritus Sancti, qui in te infusus est. Amen. In nomine Angelorum et Archangelorum. Amen. In nomine Thronorum et Dominationum. Amen. In nomine Principatum et Potestatum et omnium caelestium Virtutum. Amen. In nomine Cherubin et Seraphin. Amen. In nomine Patriarcharum et Prophetarum. Amen. In nomine Apostolorum et Martyrum. Amen. In nomine Confessorum et Episcoporum. Amen. In nomine Sacerdotum et Levitarum, et omnium Ecclesiae Catholicae graduum. Amen.” Henderson, *Manuale*, 1.*55–56.

67. Julian, *Vision Showed to a Devout Woman*, 2.3, 2.19.

68. “His dictis priusquam inungatur infirmus aut communicetur, interroget eum Sacerdos quo modo credit in Deum et si recognoscit corpus et sanguinem Domini nostri Jesu Christi: postea vero confiteatur, et ab omnibus peccatis absolvatur: quo facto osculetur crucem, deinde Sacerdotem, et postea omnes ceteros per ordinem.” Henderson, *Manuale*, 1.*45, note.

69. *Visitation A*, 1.2–2.7.

70. *Visitation A*, 2.7–9.

71. *Visitation A*, 4.6, 8–9, 9.4.

72. *Visitation A*, 7.6.

73. *Visitation A*, 5.6–10.

74. *Visitation A*, 8.9–9.3.

75. *Visitation A*, 11.3–4, 10.8, 11.7–12.2.

76. See Henderson, *Manuale*, 1.*52.

77. *Visitation A*, 12.3–5.

78. *Visitation A*, 12.7–13.2.

79. *Visitation A*, 14.3–16.10 (selections). See the well-known poem on image veneration “Nec Deus est, nec homo” as quoted in *De Visitacione infirmorum* (Migne, *Patrologia Latina*, 40.1154). The *Admonitio* has here been laicized with the addition of the important clauses beginning “nouȝt thinking on thi wif,” although these seem to have been already in the Latin source, since they are shared by the independent translation known as *Visitation B*.

80. Julian, *Vision Showed to a Devout Woman*, 2.26–32. For the echo of Anselm, see Julian’s lines “he es oure clethinge, that for love wappes us and windes us, halses us and alle beclothes us, hinges aboute us for tender love, that he maye nevere leve us” (4.3–5), apparently alluding to Anselm’s “hac sola te totum contege; hac morte te totum involve” (Migne, *Patrologia Latina*, 158.686). *Visitation A* as such is probably later and so unlikely to be Julian’s specific source. See Appleford, “Comene Course of Prayer.”

81. See Henderson, *Manuale*, 1.*45–48, a substantial addition.

82. The earliest copy of *Visitation A* is Cambridge, University Library MS Ee.5.13, from the last quarter of the fourteenth century: for a brief descripton, see Charles Hardwick and Henry Richards Luard, *A Catalogue of the Manuscripts Preserved in the Library of the University of Cambridge*, 2 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1856–67), 2.175–76. *Visitation E* appears in Cambridge, University Library Dd.1.17, from the same period, written on the last folio of a copy of a *Piers Plowman* B text (ff. 31–32), after which follows a copy of the “Defective Version” of *Mandeville’s Travels*. See Hardwick and Luard, *Catalogue*, 1.15–26; M. C. Seymour, ed., *The Defective Version of “Mandeville’s Travels,”* EETS OS 319 (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 179–80; C. David Benson and L. S. Blanchfield, *Manuscripts of “Piers Plowman”: The B-Text* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1997), 32–38; and Kerby-Fulton, *Books Under Suspicion*, 109–24 (on the “Joachite Schism prophecy” and its relation to Langland’s poem). For the date and structure of University College 97, a composite manuscript, see S. J. Ogilvie-Thomson, *Index of Middle English Prose Handlist VIII: Manuscripts Containing Middle English Prose in Oxford College Libraries* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1991), 109–12; Jill Havens,

"Instruction, Devotion, Meditation, Sermon: A Critical Edition of Selected English Religious Texts in Oxford, University College 97" (D.Phil. diss., Oxford University, 1995). For the book's association with Counter, see Catto, "Sir William Beauchamp"; for Counter's and the manuscript's connections with London, see A. I. Doyle, "University College, Oxford, MS 97 and Its Relationship to the Simeon Manuscript (British Library Add. 22283)," in *So Meny People Longages and Tonges: Philological Essays in Scots and Middle English Presented to Angus McIntoch*, ed. Michael Benskin and M. L. Samuels (Edinburgh: Middle English Dialect Project, 1981), 265–82, at 273–74.

83. "Lay miscellanies" include Bodley 938 and Oxford, Bodleian Library Laud Miscellaneous 210 (West Midlands with London connections); University College 97 (London with West Midlands connection); Harley 2398 (West Midlands with London connections) and London, British Library Royal MS 17.A.xxvi; Westminster School 3 (London with West Midlands connections); and Cambridge, University Library MS Nn.4.12. More ambiguous cases are: Oxford, University College MS 4; Cambridge Dd.1.17; and Dublin, Trinity College MS 432. Only London, British Library MS Additional 32320 and British Library Harley MS 211, and London, Lambeth Palace MS 432, seem clearly produced for professional religious.

84. Matthew 25:35–36 in the Wycliffite Later Version. See John Wycliffe, *Holy Bible ... by John Wycliffe and His Followers*, ed. Josiah Forshall and Frederic Madden, 4 vols. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1850), 4.71.

85. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, trans. Fathers of the English Dominican Province, 4 vols. (Allen, Tex.: Christian Classics, 1981), 2.2.32.

86. Langland, *Piers Plowman*, B 7.26.

87. Cambridge Nn.4.12, f. 39: see Margaret Connolly, *The Index of Middle English Prose: Handlist XIX: Manuscripts in the University Library, Cambridge (Dd–Oo)* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2009).

88. On manuscripts of this particular work of mercy text, see Fiona Somerset, "Textual Transmission, Variance, and Religious Identity Among Lollard Pastoralia," in *Religious Controversy in Europe, 1378–1536: Textual Transmission and Networks of Readership*, ed. Pavel Soukup and Michael Van Dussen (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 2013), 44–66.

89. The work begins "my deere sone or doughter in God," suggesting a sacerdotal voice, but all later sections begin "brother or suster" or "brother or suster in god" (*Visitation* E, 2.449–51). *Visitation* A likewise begins "my dere sone in God," and later addresses the sick person as "sone ... man ... brother" (1.1, 4.10, 9.6, 12.7).

90. *Visitation* A, 4.5–7; *Visitation* E, 2.450.

91. *Visitation* E, 2.453: compare the prayers for healing at the outset of the *Ordo*, which cites the same biblical examples.

92. *Visitation* E, 2.450.

93. *Visitation* E, 2.449–50.

94. *Visitation* E, 2.452. Cambridge Nn.4.12, the manuscript used by Kinpoitner, differs slightly here: "or ellis if thou have no time to sai alle for hast of death, begin here and speke to him on this maner, whan thou seest that he neieth the deth" Kinpoitner, "Edition of De visitacione," *Visitation* E, 28.196–98).

95. *Visitation* E, 2.449–50. For the *Visitation* A version, see earlier in this chapter.

96. *Visitation* E, 2.451–52.

97. Lindenbaum, "London After Arundel," 187–89.

98. *Visitation* E, 2.449.

99. *Visitation* E, 2.452.

100. Vincent Gillespie, "Vernacular Books of Religion," in *Book Production and Publishing in Britain, 1375–1475*, ed. Jeremy Griffiths and Derek Pearsall (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 317–44, at 325.

101. See Anne Hudson, "A Lollard Sect Vocabulary?" in Benskin and Samuels, *So Meny People*, 15–30; rpt. in Anne Hudson, *Lollards and Their Books* (London: Hambledon Press, 1985), 165–80. For discussion of some of the *Visitation* E manuscripts as Lollard books, see Hudson, *Premature Reformation*, 421–25; and Havens, "Shading the Grey Area," especially a brief account of the "sectarian vocabulary" of *Visitation* E at 348–49.

102. On Lollard texts and varieties of dissident religiosity, see Fiona Somerset, *Feeling like Saints: Lollard Writing and the History of English Religion* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2014).

103. Ian Forrest, *The Detection of Heresy in Late Medieval England* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2005), 237; and Kelly and Perry, "Devotional Cosmopolitanism." Other recent work exploring the boundaries of orthodoxy in fifteenth-century English religiosity include other essays in Gillespie and Ghosh, *After Arundel*; see also Shannon McSheffery, "Heresy, Orthodoxy, and English Vernacular Religion, 1480–1525," *Past and Present* 186 (February 2005): 47–80; Kerby-Fulton, *Books Under Suspicion*; Andrew Cole, *Literature and Heresy in the Age of Chaucer* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008); essays in Fiona Somerset, Jill C. Havens, and Derrick G. Pitard, eds., *Lollards and Their Influence in Late Medieval England* (Woodbridge, England: Boydell, 2003); and contributions to Barr and Hutchinson, *Text and Controversy* (see above, note 18).

104. Catto, "Sir William Beauchamp"; and Havens, "Shading the Grey Area." See especially the presence in the manuscript of Sir John Clanvowe's *The Two Ways*, an important literary production by one of Richard II's "Lollard Knights." (For this term, see K. B. McFarlane, *Lancastrian Kings and Lollard Knights* [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972].)

105. See the discussion of the priest's manual, Cambridge, St. John's College MS S.35, in Eamon Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England, 1400–1580* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2005), 58–60; and Sr. Mary Teresa Brady, "Lollard Interpolations and Omissions in Manuscripts of the *Pore Caitif*," in *De Cella in Seculum: Religious and Secular Life and Devotion in Late Medieval England*, ed. Michael Sargent (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1989), 183–203, at 198–99.

106. In John Wyclif, *Select English Works of John Wyclif*, ed. Thomas Arnold, 3 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1869–71), 1.196.

107. Sarah Rees Jones, "The Household and English Urban Government in the Later Middle Ages," in *The Household in Late Medieval Cities: Italy and Northwestern Europe Compared*, ed. Myriam Carlier and Tim Soens (Leuven: Garant, 2001), 71–87, at 85 and 73; and Shannon McSheffery, *Marriage, Sex and Civic Culture in Late Medieval London* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006). As noted in the Introduction, the emphasis on the householders as governors of their *familiae* descends from the legal practice of the frankpledge, in which a householder offered a monetary assurance for the good behavior of his dependents, including, at least until the thirteenth century, tenants living on the householder's land (Rees Jones, "Household"). Although the noble household has long been of interest to social historians, only recently have scholars turned their attention to the specifically urban, often mercantile household. Recent studies include: Carlier and Soens, *Household in Late Medieval Cities*; Cordelia Beattie, Anna Maslakovic, and Sarah Rees Jones, eds., *The Medieval Household in Christian Europe, c. 850–c. 1550: Managing Power, Wealth and the Body* (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 2003); Isabel Davis, Miriam Müller, and Sarah Rees Jones, eds., *Love, Marriage and Family Ties in the Later Middle Ages* (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 2003); Anneke B. Mulder-Bakker and Jocelyn Wogan-Browne, eds., *Household, Women, and Christianities in Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages* (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 2006); P. J. P. Goldberg and Maryanne Kowaleski, eds., *Domesticity: Home and Householding in Later Medieval*

England (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008); Felicity Riddy, "Looking Closely: Authority and Intimacy in the Late Medieval Urban Home," in *Gendering the Master Narrative: Women and Power in the Middle Ages*, ed. Mary C. Erler and Maryanne Kowaleski (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2003), 212–22; David R. M. Gaimster and Paul Stamper, eds., *The Age of Transition: The Archaeology of English Culture 1400–1600* (Oxford: Oxbow Books, 1997); and Sarah Pearson, "Rural and Urban Houses, 1100–1500: 'Urban Adaptation' Reconsidered," in *Town and Country in the Middle Ages, 1100–1500*, ed. Kate Giles and Christopher Dyer (Leeds, England: Maney, 2005), 73–100. For important discussions of the familia specifically, see Maryanne Kowaleski, "The History of Urban Families in Medieval England," *Journal of Medieval History* 14 (1988): 47–63; and Katherine A. Lynch, "Church, Family and the Bonds of Spiritual Kinship," in her *Individuals, Families, and Communities in Europe, 1200–1800: The Urban Foundations of Western Society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 68–102.

108. Westminster 3, f. 118v. lines 5–15.

109. McSheffrey, *Marriage, Sex and Civic Culture*, 138.

110. The *Lay Folks' Catechism* presents a standard vernacular exposition: *The Lay Folks' Catechism*, ed. Thomas Frederick Simmons and Henry Edward Nolloth, EETS OS 118 (London: Paul, Trench, and Trübner, 1901).

111. The Wycliffite version of the Paternoster also appears in two other *Visitation E* compilations, Harley 2398 and Bodley 938. The Wycliffite exposition of the Ave Maria also appears alongside *Visitation E* in Bodley 938 and Westminster 3.

112. For a list of the contents, see Connolly, *Index*, 348–51.

113. "On the Apostles Creed," in Wyclif, *Select English Works*, 3.114.

114. In Horstmann, *Yorkshire Writers*, 2.454–55; and Raymo, "Works of Religious and Philosophical Instruction," 2293–94 and 2520. The text also appears in Westminster 3 and Laud Miscellaneous 210.

115. For further, discussion, see Somerset, *Feeling like Saints*, chapter 2.

116. G. F. Warner and J. P. Gilson, *Catalogue of Western Manuscripts in the Old Royal and King's Collections*, 4 vols. (London: British Museum, 1921), 2.220.

117. See Nicholas Watson, "Fashioning the Puritan Gentry-woman: Devotion and Dissent in *A Book to a Mother*," in *Medieval Women: Texts and Contexts in Late Medieval Britain: Essays for Felicity Riddy*, ed. Jocelyn Wogan-Browne et al. (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 2000), 169–84.

118. Wyclif, *Select English Works*, 3.284.

119. Westminster 3, f. 104v., lines 12–20.

120. *Visitation E*, 2.453.

121. See earlier in this chapter.

122. *Visitation E*, 2.450; *Ten Commandments Commentary*, Harley 2398, 73v; compare *Visitation A*, 2.7–3.3. The passage is not in Baudri, but the presence of *Visitation A* material shows that E is the source for the commandments prologue, not vice versa. The passage appears in all copies of *Visitation E*; the Ten Commandments prologue is unique to Harley 2398. For a discussion of other copies of this tract, see Judith Anne Jefferson, "An Edition of the Ten Commandments Commentary in BL Harley 2398" (Ph.D. diss., University of Bristol, 1995). Jefferson does not identify the intertextual relation between the two texts in Harley 2398.

123. Quoted here from *Memoriale credencium: A Late Middle English Manual of Theology for Lay People*, ed. J. H. L. Kengen (Nijmegen: Katholieke Universiteit, 1979), 37.1–5. The best account of the manuscript and its contents is in *The "Fyve Wytes": A Late Middle English Devotional Treatise*, ed. R. H. Bremmer (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1987), xi–xiii.

124. *Of Wedded Men and Wyves and Here Children*, in Wyclif, *Select English Works*, 3.188–201.

125. *Memoriale credencium*, 205.14–16.

126. Bremmer in *Fyve Wyttes*, xvii–xviii, notes sixteenth-century signatures of John and Richard Sarvant, neither of them known, although the latter identifies himself as “of mychell Deane in the Countie of glouster,” the area to which the manuscript’s dialect also points. Like Bremmer, I have failed to find fifteenth-century Sarvants from the area.

127. *Schort Reule* in Raschko, “Common Ground,” lines 55–69.

128. The work begins “as it is byfore seyd,” suggesting it may have begun life as part of a longer work, but if so, this work has not been identified: *Fyve Wyttes*, 1.1.

129. *Fyve Wyttes*, 1.11, 18–20, translating (after quoting) Jeremiah 9:21: “Ascendit mors per fenestras vestras; ingressa est domos vestras, dispergere paruulos de foris et iuuenes in plateis” (1.16–18).

130. *Fyve Wyttes*, 24.18–25.2.

131. *Fyve Wyttes*, 7.13–15, 19–21.

132. *Fyve Wyttes*, 7.22.

133. *Fyve Wyttes* 10.22–30, 11.22–26.

134. *Fyue Wyttes*, 11.26–35.

135. *Fyve Wyttes* 18.29–19.37. On this passage, see especially Cole, *Literature and Heresy*, 52–54.

136. *Fyve Wyttes*, 12.7–9.

137. *Fyve Wyttes*, 12.11–13; 1 Timothy 5:8.

138. *Fyve Wyttes*, 11.37–12.1.

139. James Simpson, *The Oxford History of English Literature*, vol. 2, 1370–1547: *Reform and Cultural Revolution* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).

CHAPTER 2. DYING GENERATIONS

1. For the Middle English translation of the ordinances, see Jean Imray, *The Charity of Richard Whittington: A History of the Trust Administered by the Mercers’ Company, 1424–1966* (London: Athlone Press, 1968), appendix 1, 107–21. Citations below are to this edition, corrected where necessary from the manuscript and with punctuation modified. The book is held at Mercers’ Hall in London. The original Latin ordinances are printed in William Dugdale, *Monasticon Anglicanum*, ed. John Caley, Henry Ellis, and Bulkeley Bandinel, 8 vols. (London: James Bohn, 1846), vol. 6, part 2, pages 744–47. Whittington had a fourth executor, the clerk John White; White died at the beginning of 1424, so before the Latin ordinances were drawn up: see Imray, *Charity*, 28.

2. For discussion of the frontispiece and William Abell’s other productions, see Jonathan Alexander, “William Abell ‘Lynmour’ and English Fifteenth-Century Illumination,” in *Kunsthistorische Forschungen Otto Pächt zu seinem 70. Geburtstag*, ed. Artur Rosenauer and Gerold Weber (Salzburg: Residenz, 1972), 166–70; C. Paul Christianson, *A Directory of London Stationers and Book Artisans, 1300–1500* (New York: Bibliographical Society of America, 1990), 59–60; and Helen Combes, “William Abell: Parishioner, Churchwarden, Limnour, Stationer in the Parish of St. Nicholas Shambles in the City of London,” *Ricardian* 12 (2000): 120–32. For discussion of the impact of acquisition of the Whittington estate on the Mercer Company’s finances, see Anne Sutton, *The Mercery of London: Trade, Goods and People, 1130–1578* (Aldershot, England: Ashgate, 2005), 163.

3. This figure could also be John White, the fourth executor. White, however, as noted, died before the Latin ordinances were drawn up; and unlike the other executor figures in the image, the priest does not have a name inscribed on his clothes, suggesting he is not part of the executor group.

4. Chesterton is mentioned by name in the ordinances: Imray, *Charity of Richard Whittington*, appendix 1, 111.

5. Visitation A, 3.9–4.2, in Robert Kinpoitner, “An Edition of *De visitacione infirmorum*” (Ph.D. diss., Fordham University, 1974). The injunction regarding the subordinate role of the physicians allude to canon 22 of the Fourth Lateran Council: see Norman P. Tanner et al., ed. and trans., *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, 2 vols. (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 1990), vol. 2, pages 245–46.

6. Visitation E, 2.452, in Carl Horstmann, ed., *Yorkshire Writers: Richard Rolle of Hampole, an English Father of the Church, and His Followers*, 2 vols. (London: Swan Sonnenschein, 1895–96).

7. Ecclesiasticus 27:2 (Later Version) in John Wycliffe, *Holy Bible ... by John Wycliffe and His Followers*, ed. Josiah Forshall and Frederic Madden, 4 vols. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1850), 2.174.

8. Visitation E, 2.449.

9. Imray, *Charity of Richard Whittington*, appendix 1, 109. (“Viri providi et devoti fervens debet esse desiderium, et cura sollicita, labilis vitae suae statum et terminum cum operibus misericordiae praevenire; et praesertim personis illis miserabilibus providere, quibus penuria paupertatis insultat, ac facultas artificio seu labore alio corporeo vitae necessaria quaerere dinoscitur interdicta, ut in die tremende iudicii portionem accipiat cum salvandis. Quod devote considerans venerabilis mercator Ricardus Whityngton antedictus, cujus manus dum vixerat ad egenos et pauperos liberaliter et largiter sunt extensae, de domo quadam elemosinae pro sustentatione perpetua pauperum hujusmodi post ipsius obitum ordinanda.... in lecto transmigrationis suae districtiu soneravit” [Dugdale, *Monasticum*, 6.2.744].)

10. Imray, *Charity of Richard Whittington*, appendix 1, 109.

11. Imray, *Charity of Richard Whittington*, appendix 1, 120.

12. Imray, *Charity of Richard Whittington*, appendix 1, 121.

13. Geoffrey Chaucer, *Troilus and Criseyde*, in *The Riverside Chaucer*, 3rd ed., ed. Larry Benson and F. R. Robinson (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1987), book 5, lines 1786–92 and 1856–59; and John Lydgate, *Lydgate’s Troy Book*, ed. Henry Bergen, 4 pts. in 2 vols., EETS ES 97, 103, 106, 126 (London: Paul, Trench, and Trübner, 1906–35), vol. 2, page 879, lines 92–99.

14. It is worth noting in this context that John Carpenter has recently been identified as the scribe of Pierpont Morgan Library MS M 817, an early fifteenth-century manuscript of Chaucer’s *Troilus and Criseyde*; see Linne Mooney, Simon Horobin, and Estelle Stubbs, *Late Medieval English Scribes*, June 26, 2013 <<http://www.medievalscribes.com>>, accessed December 1, 2013; and Linne R. Mooney and Estelle Stubbs, *Scribes and the City: London Guildhall Clerks and the Dissemination of Middle English Literature, 1375–1425* (Woodbridge, England : York Medieval Press and Boydell, 2013), 93.

15. See Sylvia Federico, *New Troy: Fantasies of Empire in the Late Middle Ages*, *Medieval Cultures* 36 (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003); and David C. Benson, “Civic Lydgate: The Poet and London,” in *John Lydgate: Poetry, Culture, and Lancastrian England*, ed. Larry Scanlon and James Simpson (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 2006), 147–68.

16. On charisma and the production of cultural memory, see Jan Assman, *Cultural Memory and Early Civilization: Writing, Remembrance, and Political Imagination* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

17. See Maura Nolan, *John Lydgate and the Making of Public Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

18. Geoffrey Chaucer, *Chaucer’s Boece*, ed. Tim William Machan (Heidelberg: Winter, 2008), Book 2, prosa 2, 39.

19. Quoted by Odd Langholm, *Economics in the Medieval Schools: Wealth*,

Exchange, Value, Money, and Usury According to the Paris Theological Tradition, 1200–1350 (Leiden: Brill, 1992), 130–31.

20. Chaucer, *Troilus and Criseyde*, 5.1814–22.

21. William Langland, *Piers Plowman: A Parallel-Text Edition of the A, B, C and Z versions*, ed. A. V. C. Schmidt, 2 vols. (London: Longman, 1995; reprint, Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications and Western Michigan University, 2008), vol. 1, B 7.26, 29–32. On this passage, see Amy Appleford and Nicholas Watson, “Merchant Religion in Fifteenth-Century London: The Writings of William Litchfield,” *Chaucer Review* 46, nos. 1–2 (2011): 203–22, at 203–4.

22. Langland, *Piers Plowman*, B 7.18.

23. Caroline M. Barron, *London in the Later Middle Ages: Government and People, 1200–1500* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 306. For Carpenter’s career, particularly as a copyist, see, most recently, Mooney and Stubbs, *Scribes and the City*, 86–106.

24. The phrase is from W. B. Yeats’s poem “Sailing to Byzantium.”

25. Wycliffe, *Holy Bible ... by John Wycliffe and His Followers*, 4.71.

26. Rotha Mary Clay, *The Mediaeval Hospitals of England* (London: Methuen, 1909), 81; on the medieval almshouse and its history in England, see also Carole Rawcliffe, *Medicine for the Soul: The Life, Death and Resurrection of an English Medieval Hospital, St. Giles’s, Norwich, c. 1249–1550* (Stroud: Sutton, 1999); Sheila Sweetinburgh, *The Role of the Hospital in Medieval England: Gift-Giving and the Spiritual Economy* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2004); Elizabeth Prescott, *The English Medieval Hospital 1050–1640* (London: Seaby, 1992); and Nicholas Orme and Margaret Webster, *The English Hospital, 1070–1570* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1995). On guild-founded London almshouses before Whittington’s, see Matthew Davies, “The Tailors of London: Corporate Charity in the Late Medieval Town,” in *Crown, Government and People in the Fifteenth Century*, ed. Rowena Archer (Stroud: St. Martin’s Press, 1995), 161–90. For an overview of London area religious foundations more generally see Caroline M. Barron and Matthew Davies, eds. *The Religious Houses of London and Middlesex* (London: Institute of Historical Research, University of London, 2007).

27. For Frank Rexroth, the Whittington almshouse is a prime example of the “repressive measures taken by the urban authorities” against the London disenfranchised: *Milieu der Nacht* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Reprecht, 1999), trans. into English by Pamela E. Selwyn as *Deviance and Power in Late Medieval London* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

28. Imray, *Charity of Richard Whittington*, appendix 1, 109.

29. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, trans. Fathers of the English Dominican Province, 4 vols. (Allen, Tex: Christian Classics, 1981), vol. 3, 2a2ae, q. 66, art. 7.

30. Commandment VII, iv, *Dives and Pauper*, ed. Priscilla Heath Barnum, 3 vols., EETS OS 275, 280, 323 (London: Oxford University Press, 1976–2004), 2.137, lines 64–70.

31. Giacomo Todeschini, “Theological Roots of the Medieval/Modern Merchants’ Self-Representation,” in *The Self-Perception of Early Modern Capitalists*, ed. Margaret C. Jacob and Catherine Secretan (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 17–46.

32. Imray, *Charity of Richard Whittington*, appendix 1, 111, 110. Of interest here is the suggestion that the almshouse housed needy women, presumably as part of a married couple. See also chapter 21 of the ordinances, which again suggests the inmates could in theory include women (appendix 1, 117).

33. Imray, *Charity of Richard Whittington*, appendix 1, 111, marginal gloss.

34. Imray, *Charity of Richard Whittington*, appendix 1, 115.

35. Imray, *Charity of Richard Whittington*, appendix 1, 116. For a discussion of the resonance of “openly in English” and the possible sociopolitical implications of the

ordinance translation project, see my “The Good Death of Richard Whittington: Corpse to Corporation,” in *The Ends of the Body in Medieval Culture: Identity and Community*, ed. Suzanne Akbari and Jill Ross (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2014), 86–121.

36. Imray, *Charity of Richard Whittington*, appendix 1, 110. For teaching by word and example, see Caroline Walker Bynum’s discussion of the association of the *Verbo et exemplo* trope with regular canons and secular priests in *Jesus as Mother: Studies in the Spirituality of the High Middle Ages* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), chapter 1.

37. Imray, *Charity of Richard Whittington*, appendix 1, 112. The almshouse’s emphasis on “a place by him self” and some measure of domestic comfort reflects a wider change in late medieval England from large halls to private rooms in a range of historically communal religious foundations: monastic, hospital, and almshouse. For discussion of changes in almshouses specifically, see Prescott, *English Medieval Hospital*, 61–67. For Rexroth, providing individual privies for each chamber is intended by the executors to protect the “modesty” of the inmates, thus ensuring they remain part of the “shame-faced”—that is, respectable—poor (*Deviance*, 253–55).

38. Imray, *Charity of Richard Whittington*, appendix 1, 116. Imray reads “thries I” for “thries L”: a Paternoster is said after every ten Aves, the Apostles’ Creed after every fifty.

39. Thus those who cannot say the “Deo profundis with the versicles and Oriosons that longeth ther to” at the tomb may substitute “thre pater nosters iij Ave maries and oon Crede”: Imray, *Charity of Richard Whittington*, appendix 1, 116.

40. See influential studies by W. K. Jordan, *The Charities of London, 1480–1660: The Aspirations and the Achievements of the Urban Society* (Hamden, Conn.: Archon Books, 1974), and *Philanthropy in England, 1480–1660: A Study of the Changing Pattern of English Social Aspirations* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1959). But see also J. A. F. Thomson’s more nuanced discussion of medieval forms of charity in “Piety and Charity in Later Medieval London,” *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 16 (1965): 178–95.

41. Imray, *Charity of Richard Whittington*, appendix 1, 115, 113.

42. Rawcliffe, *Medicine for the Soul*, 5.

43. Imray, *Charity of Richard Whittington*, appendix 1, 111.

44. Prescott, *English Medieval Hospital*, 49. Carpenter had done the same thing seven years earlier for the Mercers’ Company, which had been until that time without official corporate status. It did have a charter under Richard II, but the confirmation of the charter in 1424/5 allowed the guild to use a seal and act as a legal body. For discussion of the rise of incorporation in the period, see James Tait, *The Medieval English Borough: Studies on Its Origins and Constitutional History* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1936); F. W. Maitland, *Township and Borough* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1964); Heinz Lubasz, “The Corporate Borough in the Common Law of the Late Year-Book Period,” *Law Quarterly Review* 80 (1964): 228–43; Robert Tittler, *The Reformation and the Towns in England: Politics and Political Culture, c. 1540–1640* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998); and Susan Reynolds, *An Introduction to the History of English Medieval Towns* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977). See also Reynolds’s review of Stephen Yeazell’s *The History of Group Litigation: From Medieval Group Litigation to the Modern Class Action in UCLA Law Review* 37, no. 2 (1989): 421–32.

45. Indeed, in her review of Yeazell, *History of Group Litigation*, Reynolds suggests that the trend for secular foundations like the almshouse to seek corporate status in the early fifteenth century was mostly “a consequence of Mortmain legislation,” specifically the bill of 1388, which attempted more stringent controls on property

bequests to perpetual corporate bodies. On the uses of mortmain generally, see Sandra Raban, *Mortmain Legislation and the English Church, 1279–1500* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982).

46. Imray, *Charity of Richard Whittington*, appendix 1, 117.

47. “The Lollard Disendowment Bill” is printed in Anne Hudson, *Selections from English Wycliffite Writings* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997), 135–37 and notes at 203–4, quotation here at 135.17–19. The petition survives in several Latin and vernacular chronicles, where it is sometimes dated 1407 and sometimes 1410; Hudson suggests that the 1410 dating is “more likely.”

48. “Twelve Conclusions of the Lollards” is printed in Hudson, *Selections from English Wycliffite Writings*, 24–29 and notes at 150–55, quotation here at 26.75–87; also in H. S. Cronin, “Twelve Conclusions of the Lollards,” *English Historical Review* 12 (1907): 292–304.

49. Imray, *Charity of Richard Whittington*, appendix 1, 116. According to the foundation document for the college of priests, the executors create the college, at Whittington’s request, “divini cultus augmentum et animarum salutem” (Dugdale, *Monasticon*, 6.2.738).

50. For the omnipresence of Whittington’s arms at the newly renovated Guildhall, see Caroline Barron, *The Medieval Guildhall of London* (London: Corporation of London, 1974); at St. Bartholomew’s, see Norman Moore, *The History of St. Bartholomew’s Hospital* (London: Pearson, 1918), 15.

51. Dugdale, *Monasticon*, 6.2.739: writing in November 1424, the executors propose to establish “quoddam collegium de quinque vel sex capellanis perpetuis; quorum unus erit magister, aliis quoque clericis et ministris ibidem pro perpetuo Domino famulaturis, et quamdam domum elemosinae juxta praefatam ecclesiam de tresdecem pauperibus, quorum unus erit tutor perpetuo sustentandis in eadem.”

52. See Sheila Lindenbaum, “London After Arundel: Learned Rectors and the Strategies of Orthodox Reform,” in *After Arundel, Religious Writing in Fifteenth-Century England*, ed. Vincent Gillespie and Kantik Ghosh (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 2011), 187–208.

53. The first master was William Brooke, Whittington’s old rector, who may be depicted in the Almshouse frontispiece. The first fellows were: “Honestos quoque discretos et ydoneos presbyteros subscriptos; viz. dominos Willielmum Brooke, Johannem Whyte, Nicholaum Gaytone, Ricardum Olyve, et Gregorium Kyng, de quorum scientiis, conversationibus, et aliis virtutibus experti sumus ad plenum” (Dugdale, *Monasticon*, 6.2.739). Brooke, who was already rector, was not a doctor of divinity.

54. On this other John Carpenter, see Roy Martin Haines, “Carpenter, John (c. 1395–1476),” *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004–), accessed July 3, 2013, doi:10.1093/ref:odnb/4729.

55. See Wendy Scase, “Reginald Pecock, John Carpenter and John Colop’s ‘Common-Profit’ Books: Aspects of Book Ownership and Circulation in Fifteenth-Century London,” *Medium Ævum* 61 (1992): 261–74, at 267–68.

56. Reginald Pecock, *The Donet*, ed. E. V. Hitchcock, EETS OS 156 (London: Oxford University Press, 1921), 8.4. On Pecock generally see Wendy Scase, *Reginald Pecock, Authors of the Middle Ages 3* (Aldershot, England: Ashgate, 1996); on Pecock and London, see Sheila Lindenbaum, “London Texts and Literate Practice,” in *The Cambridge History of Medieval English Literature*, ed. David Wallace (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 284–310; and Mishtooni Bose, “Reginald Pecock’s Vernacular Voice,” in *Lollards and Their Influence in Late Medieval England*, ed. Fiona Somerset, Jill C. Havens, and Derrick G. Pitard (Woodbridge, England: Boydell, 2003), 217–36. Pecock dates his *Reule of Crysten Religioun* to 1443 in the text (*Reule of Crysten Religioun*, ed. W. C. Greet, EETS OS 171 [London: Oxford

University Press, 1927], 434).

57. Reginald Pecock, *The Repressor of Over Much Blaming of the Clergy*, ed. Churchill Babington, 2 vols. (London: Longman, Green, Longman, and Roberts, 1860), 1.6.

58. Pecock, *The Donet*, appendix 1, 226.

59. See Scase, *Reginald Pecock*.

60. For discussion of Eborall and the preaching controversy relationship, see R. M. Ball, "The Opponents of Bishop Pecok," *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 48, no. 2. (April 1997): 230–62. The book examined by Eborall and Ive is Manchester, John Rylands Library English MS 77 and the note appears on f. 267v. For discussion of the manuscripts, see Margaret Deanesly, *The Lollard Bible* (1920; repr., Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1966), 336; Mary Dove, *The First English Bible: The Text and Contexts of the Wycliffite Versions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 47–53; and most recently, Fiona Somerset, "Censorship," in *The Production of Books in England, 1350–1500*, ed. Alexandra Gillespie and Daniel Wakelin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 239–58, at 249–50, which includes an image of the manuscript page with the notation.

61. See F. R. H. Du Boulay, "The Quarrel Between the Carmelite Friars and the Secular Clergy of London, 1464–1468," *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 6 (1955): 156–74. Ive's sermons at London and earlier lectures at Oxford survive in Oxford, Bodleian Library Latin MS th.e. 25, fos. ir–26v: "antiquum errorem de mendicitate Christi" (f. 3v).

62. Eborall's surviving books include a commentary on Ovid's *Metamorphoses* by Peter Bersuire, although ascribed to Nicholas Trivet (Oxford, St. John's College MS 137), and a large miscellany that includes Giles of Rome's *De regimine principum*, a course of study on the works of Aristotle and on Augustine, Prosper of Aquitaine's *Liber sententiarum*, an abbreviated copy of Boethius's *Consolation of Philosophy*, and several works by Robert Grosseteste (London, British Library Royal MS 5.C.iii). Eborall directed that these last two volumes go to fellow priests, with the further instruction that the books not be sold after their deaths but be passed to another preacher, in a manner reminiscent of the earlier lay Colop common profit book scheme. Eborall preached before the court in 1466/7 and the year before at the convocation of clergy at St. Paul's Cathedral, which later had a copy of his sermons: see John Bale, *Index Britanniae scriptorum*, ed. Reginald Lane Poole and Mary Bateson (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1902; repr., Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1990), 437; and Lambeth Palace Library, Register of John Stafford and John Kemp, f. 79r.

63. Jocelyn Wogan-Browne, Nicholas Watson, Andrew Taylor, and Ruth Evans, eds., *The Idea of the Vernacular: An Anthology of Middle English Literary Theory, 1280–1520* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1999), 240 (item 3.6, lines 4–7). On *Pore Caitif*, see Sr. Mary Teresa Brady, "The Pore Caitiff: An Introductory Study," *Traditio* 10 (1954): 529–48.

64. A. I. Doyle, "The European Circulation of Three Latin Spiritual Texts," in *Latin and Vernacular: Studies in Late Medieval Texts and Manuscripts*, ed. A. J. Minnis (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1989), 129–46, at 133 n. 30, where the Bodley 938 scribe's part in Cambridge, University Library MS Ff.6.31, is identified as folios 43–99. The "common profit" compilation made with the estate of Colop contains a similar mix of "moderate Lollard" and contemplative materials to Bodley 938, although it does not contain any versions of the *Visitation of the Sick*; see Ralph Hanna, *Pursuing History: Middle English Manuscripts and Their Texts* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1996), 44.

65. Carpenter's will is now held at the London Metropolitan Archives: formerly GL Ms 9171/4, it is now referenced as DL/C/B/004/MS09171/004. Thomas Brewer includes a translation of the will in his *Memoir of the Life and Times of John*

Carpenter, *Town Clerk of London* (London: Arthur Taylor, 1856). See also the account of Carpenter's bequest to the London bishop in Scase, "Reginald Pecock, John Carpenter." For what is known about the library building and its later donors, see Barron, *Medieval Guildhall*, 33–38.

66. For the text of the bequest, see London, Guildhall MS 25513 ff. 156–59; for discussion of this chantry, see Marie-Hélène Rousseau, *Saving the Souls of Medieval London: Perpetual Chantries at St. Paul's Cathedral, c. 1200–1548* (Aldershot, England: Ashgate, 2011), 87–88.

67. See Barron, *Medieval Guildhall*, 27. The narrative description of the fifteenth-century Guildhall in the recent book by David Bowsher et al., *The London Guildhall: An Archaeological History of a Neighbourhood from Early Medieval to Modern Times*, 2 vols. (London: Museum of London Archaeology Service, 2007), 2.361–65, draws extensively on Barron's earlier study.

68. There is some debate regarding the identity of the second tier of sculptures: Mark Samuels recently returns to an eighteenth-century identification of these two figures as Moses and Aaron, suggesting that they symbolize here civic law and canon law. Because Samuels presents no new evidence for his identification and it seems unlikely that the Guildhall—the seat of civic government, an importantly separate jurisdiction from that of the church—would enshrine canon law at its entrance, I retain here Barron's earlier identification of the figures as representing law and learning. See Mark Samuels, "The 15th-century Guildhall Porch," in Bowsher et al., *London Guildhall*, 2.361–64; and Barron, *Medieval Guildhall*, 27. On Carpenter and the Guildhall porch, see Caroline Barron, "The Political Culture of Medieval London," in *The Fifteenth Century*, vol. 4, edited by Linda Clark and Christine Carpenter (Woodbridge, England: Boydell, 2004), 111–34.

69. London's liberties had in recent memory once again been severely restricted by Richard II, who in 1392 replaced its mayor, alderman, and sheriff with royal appointments, including Richard Whittington himself, that later font of wealth and urban improvements.

70. See Mooney and Stubbs, *Scribes and the City*, 7–16.

71. For an overview of the city clerks and their duties, see Caroline Barron, *London in the Later Middle Ages: Government and People, 1200–1500* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004). See also Betty R. Masters, "The Town Clerk," *Guildhall Miscellany* 3 (1969): 55–74, and her *The Chamberlain of the City of London, 1237–1987* (London: Corporation of London, 1988).

72. See the classic study of the royal clerks by T. F. Tout, "Literature and Learning in the English Civil Service in the Fourteenth Century," *Speculum* 4, no. 4 (1929): 365–89, and *Chapters in the Administrative History of Mediaeval England: The Wardrobe, the Chamber and the Small Seal* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1937). See also Ethan Knapp, *Bureaucratic Muse: Thomas Hoccleve and the Literature of Late Medieval England* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2001).

73. Thomas Hoccleve, *Hoccleve's Works: The Minor Poems*, ed. Frederick J. Furnivall, EETS ES 73 (London: Paul, Trench, and Trübner, 1925), page 63, lines 1–7. See Mooney and Stubbs, *Scribes and the City*, 129–31, which suggest that the poem was first written (c. 1408–9) to Carpenter's predecessor as Common Clerk, John Merchaunt.

74. Knapp, *Bureaucratic Muse*, 32.

75. For the role of the London Guildhall as a "central repository for manuscripts of the writings of the London authors William Langland, Geoffrey Chaucer, and John Gower," as well as a copying center for works by these and others, see Mooney and Stubbs, *Scribes and the City*; quotation at 132.

76. John Carpenter, *Munimenta Gildhallae Londoniensis: Liber albus, Liber*

custumarum, et *Liber Horn*, ed. Henry T. Riley, 3 vols. (London: Longman, Brown, Green, Longmans, and Roberts, 1859–62); and John Carpenter, *Liber albus: The White Book of the City of London*, trans. Henry Thomas Riley (London: Richard Griffin, 1861). On the organization and sources of the *Liber albus*, see William Kellaway, “John Carpenter’s *Liber albus*,” *Guildhall Studies in London History* 3 (1978): 67–84. With its detailed documents of legal, economic, and ritual life of the city, the *Liber albus* has been valuable to social historians: see most recently Helen Carrel, “Food, Drink and Public Order in the London *Liber albus*,” *Urban History* 33, no. 2 (2006): 176–94.

77. Carpenter, *Liber albus*, 3. On Horn and his book productions, see Ralph Hanna, *London Literature, 1300–1380* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 52–90; and Arthur Bahr, *Fragments and Assemblages: Forming Compilations of Medieval London* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013), 51–104.

78. For comments on Carpenter’s books and his relationship especially with William Litchfield, see Anne Hudson, “Wyclif Texts in Fifteenth-Century London,” in *Studies in the Transmission of Wyclif’s Writings* (Aldershot, England: Ashgate, 2008), 3–18, at 6–7.

79. Brewer, *Memoir of the Life and Times*, 143; on William Litchfield, see Appleford and Watson, “Merchant Religion in Fifteenth-Century London.”

80. That is, secular clergy active in the city since the 1420s.

81. Brewer, *Memoir of the Life and Times*, 137. Bishop John Carpenter was by far the most socially powerful of Carpenter’s associates remembered in the will: he was clerk and chaplain to Henry VI in the early 1430s and, as bishop, founded libraries in Worcester and refounded and reendowed Westbury-on-Trym College; see Haines, “Carpenter.”

82. Brewer, *Memoir of the Life and Times*, 137–39. On Byngham and Neel and their attempts to promote education in the city, see Anne Sutton, “The Hospital of St. Thomas of Acre of London: The Search for Patronage, Liturgical Improvement, and a School, Under Master John Neel, 1420–63,” in *The Late Medieval English College and Its Context*, ed. Clive Burgess and Martin Heale (Woodbridge, England: Boydell and York Medieval Press, 2008), 199–230, quotation (from a petition to the king of 1439) at 223; and Caroline Barron, “The Expansion of Education in Fifteenth-Century London,” in *The Cloister and the World: Essays in Medieval History in Honour of Barbara Harvey*, ed. John Blair and Brian Golding (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 219–45. On Marchaunt, see Mooney and Stubbs, *Scribes and the City*, 38–65, especially 50–53, and bibliography there cited.

83. See Sutton, “Hospital of St. Thomas of Acre,” 218–26; *Calendar of Plea and Memoranda Rolls of the City of London, A.D. 1458–82*, ed. Philip E. Jones (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1961), ix–xxi, 129–31.

84. William Chedworth and Robert Langford appear in the list of chamberlain clerks in Barron, *London in the Later Middle Ages*. Chedworth was well connected: Margaret Chedworth, wife of John Howard, Duke of Norfolk, was probably William’s niece: see Anne Crawford, *Yorkist Lord: John Howard, Duke of Norfolk, c.1425–1485* (London: Continuum Books, 2010). John Chedworth, his son, was an ecclesiastic who spent time in Italy and features in Hans von Campenhausen, *Ecclesiastical Authority and Spiritual Power in the Church of the First Three Centuries*, trans. J. A. Baker (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1969), 436–42. Robert Langford became the chamberlain’s clerk (i.e., head clerk of the chamberlain’s office), a high-paying and prestigious position.

85. Brewer, *Memoir of the Life and Times*, 140. “Utile ad spectandum quomodo rex sive princeps sit excellens et famosus et virtuosus ac gloriosus, et ad contemplandum culmen regiminis regie magestatis et utilitatem et premium ejusdem” (Paris, Bibliothèque Mazarine MS 3524, explicit: <<http://>

www.calames.abes.fr/pub/#details?id=MAZC11053>. On Julianus Pomerius's *De vita contemplativa* and episcopal government, see Conrad Leyser, *Authority and Asceticism from Augustine to Gregory the Great* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

86. See James Simpson, *Sciences and the Self in Medieval Poetry: Alan of Lille's "Anticlaudianus" and John Gower's "Confessio Amantis,"* Cambridge Studies in Medieval Literature 25 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 81; *Anticlaudianus* was also a favorite source for exempla and literary paradigms in new, early fifteenth-century forms of *ars dictaminis*: see James G. Clark, *A Monastic Renaissance at St. Albans: Thomas Walsingham and His Circle, 1350–1440* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 213; and on clerkly identity and *ars dictaminis* more generally, see Ian Cornelius, "The Rhetoric of Advancement: *Ars dictaminis*, *Cursus*, and Clerical Careerism in Late Medieval England," *Journal of New Medieval Literatures* 12 (2010): 289–330. It is worth noting that Carpenter's parish church was St. Peter Cornhill, the living of the classicizing rector John Seward, on whom see V. H. Galbraith, "John Seward and His Circle," *Mediaeval and Renaissance Studies* 1 (1941–43): 85–104.

87. Brewer, *Memoir of the Life and Times*, 141. The "chamber" here is probably the small documents chamber or book room off the mayor's court, not the new Guildhall library: see discussion of the layout of this part of the building in Barron, *Medieval Guildhall*, 31.

88. Brewer, *Memoir of the Life and Times*, 140–41.

89. Francesco Petrarca, *De remediis utriusque fortunae* (Augsburg, 1532; repr. with notes and commentary by Rudolf Schottlaender and Eckhard Kessler, Munich: Fink, 1975). The work survives in over 150 manuscripts, in Latin and several vernaculars, and several printed editions. Several manuscripts of the whole work or fragments survive with English provenance, including, most famously, a copy owned by Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester (Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale lat. MS 10209, ff. 6r–263v). The text survives complete in at least three fifteenth-century manuscripts with English associations: Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 40, owned by John Blodwell, dean of St. Asaph (1418–42); Cambridge, Peterhouse College MS 271 (in a French hand but at Peterhouse before 1600); and Oxford, All Souls College MS 91, owned by James Goldwell, bishop of Norwich (d. 1499), who left it to the college. For these and other English books containing fragments or other versions of the *De remediis*, see Nicholas Mann, "Manuscripts of Petrarch's *De remediis*: A Checklist," *Italia medioevale e umanistica* 14 (1971): 57–90. An early fifteenth-century Middle English adaption survives in Cambridge, University Library MS li. 6.39: see "A Dialogue Between Reason and Adversity": A Late Middle English Version of Petrarch's "De remediis," ed. F. N. M. Diekstra (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1968). For discussion of Gloucester's ownership of *De remediis* and other works by Petrarch, see Jennifer Summit, *Memory's Library: Medieval Books in Early Modern England* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008); and Alessandra Petrina, *Cultural Politics in Fifteenth-Century England: The Case of Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester* (Leiden: Brill, 2004).

90. Francesco Petrarca, *Petrarch's Remedies for Fortune Fair and Foul: A Modern English Translation of "De remediis utriusque fortune,"* ed. and trans. Conrad Rawski, 5 vols. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991), vol. 2, page 1. On fifteenth-century English humanism, see Daniel Wakelin, "England: Humanism Beyond Weiss," in *Humanism in Fifteenth-Century Europe*, ed. David Rundle (Oxford: Society for the Study of Medieval Languages and Literature, 2012), 265–306, and "Religion, Humanism, and Humanity: Chaundler's Dialogues and the Winchester *Secretum*," in Gillespie and Ghosh, *After Arundel*, 225–44, esp. 237–41 for a discussion of mortality in the Winchester *Secretum*.

91. Petrarca, *Remedies*, 2.1.
92. Petrarca, *Remedies*, 2.6.
93. Petrarca, *Remedies*, 3.142–43 (Book 2, Dialogue 63), for example, deals with cramped living quarters.
94. The *ars moriendi* begins at Book 2, Dialogue 117 and continues to Dialogue 132, the end of the second book (3.283–338).
95. On Augustine and *meditatio mortis*, see Alexander Lee, *Petrarch and St. Augustine: Classical Scholarship, Christian Theology, and the Origins of the Renaissance in Italy* (Leiden: Brill, 2012), esp. 74–81, 84–90. For *melete thanatou* and death meditation in Stoic thought, see Richard Sorabji, *Emotion and Peace of Mind: From Stoic Agitation to Christian Temptation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), esp. 228–52. On Petrarch's interest in both classical and Christian traditions of detachment from the world, see Gur Zak, *Petrarch's Humanism and the Care of the Self* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).
96. Petrarca, *Remedies*, 3.283, 290 (Book 2, Dialogue 117).
97. See discussion earlier in chapter.
98. Petrarca, *Remedies*, 3.325, 327 (Book 2, Dialogue 127).
99. Petrarca, *Remedies*, 3.301 (Book 2, Dialogue 119).
100. Diekstra in *Dialogue Between Reason and Adversity*, 64–65.
101. Petrarca, *Remedies*, 3.301, 302 (Book 2 Dialogue 119).
102. Florence Warren, ed., *The Dance of Death*, EETS OS 181 (London: Oxford University Press, 1931), version A, lines 9–16. Medial caesuras are given as they are in the edition (/); line breaks in intext citations are indicated by a double slash (/ /).
103. On London pardon cemeteries in the late medieval period, see Vanessa Harding, *The Dead and the Living in Paris and London, 1500–1670* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).
104. For the Becket tomb and cult in London, see Sutton, “Hospital of St. Thomas of Acre,” 199.
105. John Stow, *A Survey of London: Reprinted from the Text of 1603*, ed. Charles Lethbridge Kingsford, 2 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1908), 1.327. All quotations are from this edition.
106. On the social dynamics of London's cemeteries, see Vanessa Harding, “Burial Choice and Burial Location in Later Medieval London,” in *Death in Towns: Urban Responses to the Dying and the Dead, 1000–1600*, ed. Steven Bassett (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1992), 119–35; and for the St. Paul's cemetery specifically, see Harding, *Dead and the Living*, 89–91.
107. Stow, *Survey*, 1.327.
108. Carpenter, *Liber albus*, 23.
109. Carpenter, *Liber albus*, 24.
110. Carpenter, *Liber albus*, 43.
111. Diarmaid MacCulloch, *Thomas Cranmer: A Life* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1996), 227.
112. Ralph Hanna, *London Literature*, 57. The enclosure of the folkmoot is noted in Helen M. Cam, ed. *Year Books of Edward II: The Eyre of London 14 Edward II A.D. 1321*, 2 vols. (London: Selden Society, 1968–69), 1.32 and n. 4.
113. For a detailed overview of relations between the city and the cathedral in the late Middle Ages, see especially Caroline M. Barron and Marie-Hélène Rousseau, “Cathedral, City and State,” in *St. Paul's: The Cathedral Church of London, 604–2004*, ed. Derek Keene, Arthur Burns, and Andrew Saint (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2004), 33–44; and John Schofield, *St. Paul's Cathedral Before Wren* (Swindon: English Heritage, 2011).
114. The assumption that the dance images were put up in the early 1430s begins with Warren, *Dance of Death*, xxiii, n. 1, who links the *Dance of Death* project

with Carpenter's attaining a license to refund the chantry at the St. Paul's charnel in 1430 (see above, n. 66), although no surviving documentary evidence connects these projects. In her dissertation, "Fro Paris to Ingland? The 'Danse macabre' in Text and Image in Late-Medieval England" (Leiden University, 2008), Sophie Oosterwijk notes that the earliest reference to the images is found in the will of a Bristol shoemaker from the late 1440s, who gives eighteen pounds for a "Dawnse of Powlys" to be put up in his parish church (108).

115. For the mural at the Holy Innocents, see James M. Clark, *The Dance of Death in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance* (Glasgow: Jackson, 1950), chapter 3; and more recently, on the cemetery's "prominent part in the mythology of Parisian identity," Harding, *Dead and the Living*, chapter 4. On the Paris *Danse* and the emergence of the motif, see most recently Elina Gertsman, *The Dance of Death in the Middle Ages: Image, Text, Performance*, Studies in the Visual Cultures of the Middle Ages 3 (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 2010), 1–18. On the dance of death in England, see Sophie Oosterwijk, "Fro Paris to Ingland?" and "Of Corpses, Constables and Kings: The *Danse macabre* in Late Medieval and Renaissance Culture," *Journal of the British Archaeological Association* 157 (2004): 61–90. On the motif more generally, see J. M. Clark, *Dance of Death*; Paul Binski, *Medieval Death: Ritual and Representation* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1996), 153–59; Leonard P. Kurtz, *The Dance of Death and the Macabre Spirit in European Literature* (New York: Gordon Press, 1975); and Gertsman, *Dance of Death*.

116. For discussion of the history and physical layout of the cemetery, see Harding, *Living and the Dead*, 101–5; and the history of the cemetery in Michel Fleury et al., *Les Saints-Innocents* (Paris: Delegation à l'Action Artistique de la Ville de Paris, 1990).

117. See Chapter 4.

118. Gertsman, *Dance of Death*, 3; Harding, *Living and the Dead*, 104. Gertsman estimates the mural was "about twenty metres long" (3).

119. Guyot Marchant, *La Danse macabre de Guy Marchant* (Paris, 1486), Collection des chefs-d'oeuvre du livre français 2 (Paris: Editions des Quatre Chemins, 1925).

120. Warren, *Dance of Death*, A, line 22. None of the surviving manuscripts of either the A or B versions contain images. On the circumstances surrounding Lydgate's time in Paris, see Derek Pearsall, *John Lydgate* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1970), 166–69. On Lydgate's poem, see James Simpson, *The Oxford History of English Literature*, vol. 2, 1350–1547: *Reform and Cultural Revolution* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 50–62; Derek Pearsall, "Signs of Life in Lydgate's *Danse macabre*," in *Zeit, Tod, und Ewigkeit in der Renaissance Literatur*, ed. James Hogg, 3 vols., *Analecta Cartusiana* 117 (Salzburg: Institut für Anglistik und Amerikanistik, 1988), 3.58–71; Jane Taylor, "Translation as Reception: *La Danse macabré*," in *Shifts and Transpositions in Medieval Narrative: A Festschrift for Dr. Elspeth Kennedy*, ed. Karen Pratt (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1994), 181–92; Sophie Oosterwijk, "Death, Memory and Commemoration: John Lydgate and 'Macabrees Daunce' at Old St. Paul's Cathedral, London," in *Memory and Commemoration in Medieval England: Proceedings of the 2008 Harlaxton Symposium*, ed. Caroline M. Barron and Clive Burgess, *Harlaxton Medieval Studies* 20 (Donnington, England: Shaun Tyas, 2010), 185–201; and Seeta Chaganti, "*Danse macabre* and the Virtual Churchyard," *Postmedieval* 3.1 (2012): 7–26. Ashby Kinch has recently made a detailed study of the unique cycle of *Danse macabre* images in Morgan Library MS M 359 alongside both Lydgate's A version of the translation and the B reworking of A: see *Imago Mortis: Mediating Images of Death in Late Medieval Culture*, Visualising the Middle Ages 9 (Leiden: Brill, 2013), chapters 5 and 6. Quotations are from Warren, *Dance of Death*.

121. Most scholars assume that Marchant's edition is closely modeled on the wall paintings (see, for example, Gertsman, *Dance of Death*, 1–3), but for a discussion of Marchant's edition that queries the relationship between it and the Innocents' Dance, see David A. Fein, "Guyot Marchant's *Danse macabre*: The Relationship Between Image and Text," *Mirator Elokuu* (August 2000): 1–11.
122. Warren, *Dance of Death* A, lines 657, 664.
123. Warren, *Dance of Death* A, lines 28–32, 18, 35.
124. We owe the detail that the paintings were on panels to comments in the 1603 edition of Stow, *Survey*, 1.10. On the uses of panels with texts or image-texts in English public spaces, see Michael Van Dussen, "Tourists and *Tabulae* in Late-Medieval England," in *Truth and Tales: Cultural Mobility and Medieval Media*, ed. Fiona Somerset and Nicholas Watson (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, forthcoming).
125. For discussion of the manuscripts and their groupings, see Pearsall, "Signs of Life"; M. C. Seymour, "Some Lydgate Manuscripts: *Lives of SS. Edmund and Fremund* and *Dance macabre*," *Edinburgh Bibliographical Society Transactions* 5, no. 4 (1985): 10–24; A. S. G. Edwards, "Lydgate Manuscripts: Some Directions for Future Research," in *Manuscripts and Readers in Fifteenth-Century England: The Literary Implications of Manuscript Study, Essays from the 1981 Conference at the University of York*, ed. Derek Pearsall (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1983), 15–26.
126. Amy Appleford, "The Dance of Death in London: John Carpenter, John Lydgate, and the 'Daunce of Poulys,'" *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 38, no. 2 (2008): 285–314. The association of the Pardon Churchyard *Daunce of Poulys* with the B version has been disputed by Oosterwijk in "Death, Memory, Commemoration," where she argues that the stanzas added in B, and other variations from A, are too unmetrical to be the work of Lydgate. However, whether or not Lydgate wrote these stanzas is not relevant: there is no clear evidence for the assumption that Oosterwijk and my article both share with earlier scholarship that Lydgate was himself involved in Carpenter's commission. Carpenter may have collaborated with Lydgate on an account of Henry VI's entry into London in February 1432. Lydgate's poem on the topic appears to be based on Carpenter's Latin epistolary account of the program of seven pageants: see Henry N. MacCracken, "King Henry's Triumphal Entry into London: Lydgate's Poem and Carpenter's Letter," *Archiv für das Studium der neuen Sprachen und Literaturen* 126 (1911): 75–102. But this need not mean the two men worked together on the *Daunce of Paulys*.
127. Quoted in Warren, *Dance of Death*, xxiii, who suggests that this colophon underlies the nearly identical account of the *Daunce of Poulys* by Stow, who at one point owned the manuscript.
128. See Warren, *Dance of Death*, xxiv–xxxi.
129. This suggestion is made by Rosemarie Potz McGerr, in her discussion of Corpus Christi 237, which also contains *Pilgrimage of the Soul*: see McGerr, ed., *The Pilgrimage of the Soul: A Critical Edition of the Middle English Dream Vision* (New York: Garland, 1990), lxvii. I have not been able to identify this Edmund.
130. The manuscript is missing several folios and some of its pages may have been rearranged.
131. Warren, *Dance of Death* A, lines 307–8, 310–11.
132. Warren, *Dance of Death* B, lines 342–48. Although they were a royal appointment, by the fifteenth century the sergeants at law were the "elite of the legal profession" and especially associated with the London milieu: "the city of London required from the thirteenth century that cases heard in its own courts concerning rights to and disputes over land had to be pleaded by serjeants-at-law" (W. M. Ormrod, "The Use of English: Language, Law, and Political Culture in

Fourteenth-Century England,” *Speculum* 78 [2003]: 750–87, at 767). See also Chaucer’s description of the Sergeant as often at “the parvys” –i.e., hanging around St. Paul’s Cathedral with other lawyers looking for trade: George L. Frost, “Chaucer’s Man of Law at the Parvis,” *Modern Language Notes* 44 (1929): 496–501, at 500.

133. Warren, *Dance of Death* B, lines 214–24.

134. John Le Neve, *Fasti Ecclesiae Anglicanae 1300–1541: St. Paul’s London*, edited by Joyce M. Horn (London Athlone Press, 1963), 4–7.

135. Warren, *Dance of Death* B, lines 257–72.

136. Warren, *Dance of Death* B, lines 449–64.

137. Jill Mann, *Chaucer and Medieval Estates Satire: The Literature of Social Classes and the “General Prologue” to the “Canterbury Tales”* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973). See also comments on sermones nulli parcentes and estates satire by Claire Waters in her *Angels and Earthly Creatures: Preaching, Performance, and Gender in the Later Middle Ages* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), 155.

138. Warren, *Dance of Death* B, lines 194–95.

139. Warren, *Dance of Death* B, lines 205–8. Contrast the abbess’s response in the A version: “Mi chekes rounde / vernysshed for to shyne // Ungirte ful ofte / to walke atte large // Thus cruel dethe / doth al estates fyne // Who hath no ship / mote rowe yn bote or barge” (lines 261–64).

140. Warren, *Dance of Death* B, lines 524–28, nearly identical with A, lines 557–60.

141. Warren, *Dance of Death* A, lines 471–72.

142. Warren, *Dance of Death* B, lines 333–34.

143. Warren, *Dance of Death* B, lines 505–8.

144. Warren, *Dance of Death* B, lines 446–48; compare version A: “3if hit were so / that I myght asterte // But many a man / 3if I shal not tarie / Ofte daunceth / but no thyng of herte” (lines 510–12).

145. Warren, *Dance of Death* B, lines 313–20.

146. Warren, *Dance of Death* B, lines 369–71, 380.

147. Warren, *Dance of Death* B, lines, 321–22, 329–32.

148. Warren, *Dance of Death* B, lines 281–84.

149. Warren, *Dance of Death* B, line 258.

150. Christine de Pizan, *The Book of the Body Politic*, trans. Kate Langdon Forhan (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 90. De Pizan’s source is John of Salisbury’s *Policraticus*.

151. Thomas Aquinas, *St. Thomas Aquinas: Political Writings*, ed. and trans. R. W. Dyson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 7– 8. For comments on Aquinas’s image here, see Emily Steiner, “Piers Plowman, Diversity, and the Medieval Political Aesthetic,” *Representations* 91 (2005): 1–25. See Simpson, *Oxford History*.

152. David Wallace, *Chaucerian Polity: Absolutist Lineages and Associational Forms in England and Italy* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1997), 65–82; on the interplay between hierarchical and associational forms, see also Brian Tierney, *Religion, Law, and the Growth of Constitutional Thought, 1150–1650* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982).

153. Quentin Skinner, “Ambrogio Lorenzetti’s ‘Buon governo’ Frescoes: Two Old Questions, Two New Answers,” *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institute* 62 (1999): 1–28, at 26.

154. Warren, *Dance of Death* B, lines 65.

155. Warren, *Dance of Death* B, line 176.

156. Warren, *Dance of Death* B, line 384.

1. John Trevisa, “*The Governance of Kings and Princes*”: *John Trevisa’s Middle English Translation of the “De regimine principum” of Aegidius Romanus*, ed. David C. Fowler, Charles F. Briggs, and Paul G. Remley (New York: Garland, 1997), book 2, part 1, chapter 2, page 168, lines 13–15 (punctuation modified).

2. For the important earlier example of *The Pepys Rule* and other mid-fourteenth-century London lay ascetic texts in Cambridge, Magdalene College Pepys MS 2298, see Ralph Hanna, *London Literature, 1300–1380* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 148–221.

3. On the ways Carthusians nonetheless understood “reading and writing as communal pursuits ... and created the textual society of the charterhouse explicitly to take the place of any bodily one,” see Jessica Brantley, *Reading in the Wilderness: Private Devotion and Public Performance in Late Medieval England* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), quotation at 27. Brantley’s account of the eremitic reading practices of English Carthusians resonates at several points with the account of lay reading practices presented here.

4. On the history of the Charterhouse, see David Knowles and W. F. Grimes, *Charterhouse: The Medieval Foundation in the Light of Recent Discoveries* (London: Longmans, Green, 1954); and John P. H. Clark, *The London Charterhouse: An Urban Charterhouse and Its Dissolution* (Salzburg: Institut für Anglistik und Amerikanistik, Universität Salzburg, 2008). For a recent archaeological study of the site, see Bruno Barber and Christopher Thomas, *The London Charterhouse* (London: Museum of London Archaeology Service, 2002).

5. John Cassian, *Institutiones* 4.35: “Crux nostra timor Domini est ... sicut is qui patibulo crucis affigitur non jam praesentia contemplatur, nec de suis affectionibus cogitat, non pro die crastino sollicitudine ... in corpore cunctis elementis credit esse defunctum, illuc praemittens sui cordis intuitum, quo se non dubitat illico transitorium: ita nos quoque timore Domini crucifixos oportet his omnibus ... ipsis elementis mortuos esse” (Jacques-Paul Migne, ed., *Patrologia Latina*, 221 vols. [Paris, 1844–64], 49.196).

6. One of several books in which these inscriptions survive is London, British Library Sloane MS 2515, written by Blackman, from which they are transcribed by Michael G. Sargent and Marlene Villalobos Hennessy, in “The Latin Verses over the Cell Doors of London Charterhouse,” in *Studies in Carthusian Monasticism in the Late Middle Ages*, ed. Julian M. Luxford (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 2009), 179–97, transcription at 193–97, quotation at 196, punctuation modified.

7. “Pulso.’ ‘Quis hic?’ ‘Ego sum.’ ‘Quis tu?’ ‘Mors.’ ‘Quid petis?’ ‘Ut intrem.’ ‘Expecta.’ ‘Quantum?’ ‘Donec me fecero promptum.’ ‘Expectare volo sed te dimittere nolo. Ergo festina dum vita manus peregrina” (Sargent and Hennessy, “Latin Verses,” 196). The contents of Sloane 2515 as a whole make the link between asceticism and death yet clearer, for here the verses introduce a series of texts in which death preparation and ascetic meditation are mingled: a series of artes moriendi occurs alongside works such as pseudo-Jerome’s *Speculum valde horribile* and Ambrose’s *De bono mortis*. On Blackman, see Roger Lovatt, “John Blacman: Biographer of Henry VI,” in *The Writing of History in the Middle Ages: Essays Presented to Richard William Southern*, ed. R. H. C. Davis and J. M. Wallace-Hadrill (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981), 418–44, and “The Library of John Blacman and Contemporary Carthusian Spirituality,” *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 43 (1992): 195–230.

8. John Stow, *A Survey of London: Reprinted from the Text of 1603*, ed. Charles Lethbridge Kingsford, 2 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1908), 2.82–83.

9. Litchfield’s *Simple Treatise* is included in A. C. Baugh, ed., *The English Text of*

the “Ancrene Riwe”: Edited from British Museum MS Royal 8 C.I, EETS OS 232 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1956), page 44, lines 24–28, page 13, lines 9–22, punctuation modified. On the work, see Amy Appleford and Nicholas Watson, “Merchant Religion in Fifteenth-Century London: The Writings of William Litchfield,” *Chaucer Review* 46, nos. 1–2 (2011): 203–22, at 216. For its relation to the wider *Ancrene Wisse* tradition, including *The Pepys Rule* (see n. 2 above), see Nicholas Watson, “‘With the Heat of the Hungry Heart’: Empowerment and the *Ancrene Wisse*,” in *Gendering the Master Narrative: Women and Power in the Middle Ages*, ed. Mary C. Erler and Maryanne Kowaleski (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2003), 52–70, esp. 67–69.

10. Litchfield, *Simple Treatise*, in Bough, *English Text*, 29.15–19.

11. Litchfield, *Simple Treatise*, in Bough, *English Text*, 20.28–31, 22.19–20, 45.19.

12. See the discussion in Nicholas Love, *The Mirror of the Blessed Life of Jesus Christ: A Full Critical Edition*, ed. Michael Sargent (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 2005), 70–74 and 92–94.

13. The rubric introduces the text in Cambridge, Trinity College MS R.3.21, f. 38a. For Richard Rolle of Hampole and the Carthusians, see Brantley, *Reading in the Wilderness*, 134–52. For the real Richard Rolle’s relative indifference to the ascetic modes discussed in this chapter, see Nicholas Watson, *Richard Rolle and the Invention of Authority* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 214–17.

14. *Six Masters on Tribulation*, from London, British Library Royal MS 17.A.xxv, in Carl Horstmann, ed., *Yorkshire Writers: Richard Rolle of Hampole, an English Father of the Church, and His Followers*, 2 vols. (London: Swan Sonnenschein, 1895–96), 2.390. Quotations from *Twelve Profits* are from the same collection, edited from Oxford, Bodleian Library Rawlinson MS C.894, at 2.390–406. There is no critical edition of either text.

15. As Larry Scanlon notes, “Penitential tradition, still the least studied and understood of the major forms of medieval spirituality, also still tends to be viewed as derivative, transparent, and inert.” See his “Personification and Penance,” *Yearbook of Langland Studies* 21 (2007): 1–29, at 1.

16. See Geoffrey Chaucer, “The Parson’s Tale,” in *The Riverside Chaucer*, 3rd ed., ed. Larry D. Benson and F. N. Robinson (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1987), *Canterbury Tales* 10.1.81, 86.

17. Several recent studies emphasize how the Penitential Psalms offered late medieval and early modern writers “a language for penitential conversion within the world,” resonating with my discussion in this chapter. See Lynn Staley, “The Penitential Psalms: Conversion and the Limits of Lordship,” *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 37, no. 2 (2007): 221–69, quotation at 222; David Lawton, “Voice After Arundel,” in *After Arundel: Religious Writing in Fifteenth-Century England*, ed. Vincent Gillespie and Kantik Ghosh (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 2011), 133–52; Clare King’oo, *Miserere mei: The Penitential Psalms in Late Medieval and Early Modern England* (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 2012), esp. her discussions of “penitential hermeneutics” in the introduction and chapter 2; and Michael P. Kuczynski, *Prophetic Song: The Psalms as Moral Discourse in Late Medieval England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1995), 81–119. For the ritual and linguistic aspects of penance theory and its relation to community and personal identity, see Sarah Beckwith, *Shakespeare and the Grammar of Forgiveness* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2011). For recent work on pastoral modalities of the sacrament of penance, see Abigail Firey, ed., *A New History of Penance* (Leiden: Brill, 2008), esp. the essays by Joseph Goering, “The Scholastic Turn (1100–1500): Penitential Theology and Law in the Schools” (219–38); and Henry Ansgar Kelly, “Penitential Theology and Law at the Turn of the Fifteenth Century” (239–318).

18. See Athanasius, *The Life of St. Antony*, trans. Robert T. Meyer, Ancient

Christian Writers 10 (New York: Paulist Press, 1978), 19. The Latin *Vita Antonii* reads: “Talia secum volvens, intravit ecclesiam, et accidit ut tunc evangelium legeretur in quo Dominus dicit ad divitem: Si vis perfectus esse, vade, vende omnia tua quaecunque habes, et da pauperibus, et veni, sequere me, et habebis thesaurum in coelo” (in Migne, *Patrologia Latina*, 73.127).

19. Athanasius, *Life of St. Antony* 17. The Latin *Vita Antonii* reads: “perfecta est siquidem ad virtutem via” (in Migne, *Patrologia Latina*, 73.127).

20. Ann Astell, *Job, Boethius, and Epic Truth* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1994), 89, here discussing Gregory’s understanding of Job as represented in general in his *Moralia in Job* (see n. 56 below).

21. Quotations from *Pety Job* are from Susanna Greer Fein, ed., *Moral Love Songs and Laments* (Kalamazoo, MI.: published for TEAMS in Association with the University of Rochester by Medieval Institute Publications, 1998), 308–59, at lines 8–10. I have occasionally modified punctuation.

22. See J. A. Burrow, *Thomas Hoccleve, Authors of the Middle Ages* 4 (Aldershot, England: Ashgate, 1994), 212–13.

23. *Pety Job*, lines 577–80, 583–84.

24. Baron’s Essex origins can be inferred from the coat of arms in two of his books (described below), “gules, a chevron aszure, between three garbs or,” according to Bernard Burke, *The General Armory of England, Scotland, Ireland, and Wales* (London: Harrison and Sons, 1884), 52. William Baron has previously been identified with a William Baron from Reading (likely a relation of an earlier William Baron, d. 1416), who served as member of Parliament for Reading in 1431 and was among those who took the oath of allegiance to Henry VI in 1434. This may be a different figure. The identification was suggested by George Wrottesley in his *History of the Family of Wrottesley of Wrottesley, Co. Stafford*, William Salt Archaeological Society, Collections for a History of Staffordshire, n.s. 6, no. 2 (Exeter: Pollard, 1903), 238–39, and has often been repeated. See, e.g., A. I. Doyle, “Books Connected with the Vere Family and Barking Abbey,” *Transactions of the Essex Archaeological Society* 25, no. 2 (1958): 222–43; and Paul Lee, *Nunneries, Learning, and Spirituality in Late Medieval English Society: The Dominican Priory of Dartford* (Woodbridge, England: Boydell and York Medieval Press, 2001), 173–74, an especially useful account, which consults the wills of several Baron relatives.

25. Baron succeeded Richard Knightley and there are payments to him recorded from March 1425 to July 1469: John Christopher Sainty, *Officers of the Exchequer* (London: Swift, 1983), 227. Baron is also mentioned as one of the tellers of the exchequer in C. S. Knighton, *Calendar of Inquisitions Miscellaneous Preserved in the Public Record Office* 8, 1422–85 (Woodbridge, England: Boydell, 2003), item 124; and C. A. F. Meekings and Philip Shearman, eds., *Fitznells Cartulary: A Calendar of Bodleian Library MS. Rawlinson B 430* (Guildford: Surrey Record Society, 1968), cxiv. For fifteenth-century exchequer and exchequer careers, see David Grummitt, “Public Service, Private Interest and Patronage in the Fifteenth-Century Exchequer,” in *Authority and Subversion*, ed. Linda Clark, Fifteenth Century 3 (Woodbridge, England: Boydell, 2003), 149–62, with references to Baron at 157–58. For the importance of literate laymen like Baron in the royal administration from the early fifteenth century onward, see R. L. Storey, “Gentlemen-Bureaucrats,” in *Profession, Vocation, and Culture in Later Medieval England*, ed. Cecil H. Clough (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1982), 90–119.

26. Joan Knolles is mentioned in both her grandfather’s and her father’s wills, in the first (1435) as Joan Shelley, in the second (1445) as Joan Baron. See Frederick Charles Cass, *South Mimms*, London and Middlesex Archaeological Society (Westminster: Nicholas and Sons, 1877), 107–11, which includes the former and describes the latter (for which, see Kew, England, National Archives, Prerogative

Court of Canterbury (PRO), Prob. 11/3/342). Linne Mooney and Margaret Connolly both allude to a son of William Baron, also named William, as a possible owner of Douce 322, extrapolating from an allusion in Doyle, "Books Connected with the Vere Family" (228–29), to "a speculative son and namesake" of William Baron, made on the basis of the language of the donation of Douce 322 to Parnel Wrottesley, Baron's granddaughter, discussed later in the chapter (see n. 51 below): Linne R. Mooney, "Scribes and Booklets of Trinity College, Cambridge, Manuscripts R.3.19 and R.3.21," in *Middle English Poetry, Texts and Traditions: Essays in Honour of Derek Pearsall*, ed. A. J. Minnis (Woodbridge, England: Boydell and York Medieval Press, 2001), 241–66, at 254, n. 20; and Margaret Connolly, "Mapping 'Contemplations of the Love and Dread of God,'" in *Design and Distribution of Late Medieval Manuscripts in England*, ed. Margaret Connolly and Linne R. Mooney (Woodbridge, England: Boydell and York Medieval Press, 2008), 261–78, at 268, n. 17. However, Doyle does not assert this son's existence and the only possible trace of him I have found is in the reference to two William Barons buried at the London Charterhouse in Stow's *Survey of London* (mentioned above). Given the relative prominence of the Baron family, absence of records would suggest that if Stow's "William Baron, and William Baron esquire" were father and son, the latter likely died as an infant.

27. Norman Moore, *The History of Bartholomew's Hospital*, 2 vols. (London: Pearson, 1918), 2.29, 52. Nellie J. M. Kerling, ed., *The Cartulary of St. Bartholomew's Hospital* (London: St. Bartholomew's Hospital, 1973), also has references to Baron going back to 1455.

28. Grummitt, "Public Service, Private Interest," 158; Wrottesley, *History of the Family of Wrottesley*, 239.

29. See PRO Prob. 11/3/342. Lee, *Nunneries, Learning, and Spirituality*, 173, suggests that Baron was an executor, but this is not mentioned in the will.

30. See "KNOLLES, Thomas (d. 1435), of London," in John Smith Roskell, Linda Clark, and Carole Rawcliffe, eds., *The History of Parliament: The House of Commons, 1386–1421* (Stroud, England: Sutton, 1993), <http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1386-1421/member/knolles-thomas-1435>, accessed December 1, 2013; see also Cass, *South Mimms*, 105–11.

31. John Weever, *Ancient Funeral Monuments* (London: Harper, 1631), 190.

32. N. R. Ker, *Medieval Libraries of Great Britain*, 2nd ed. (London: Royal Historical Society, 1964), 251, dates Baron's death to 1485, although the grounds for the dating are not stated.

33. Parnel was the fifth of nine children born between their parents' marriage c. 1456 and their father's death in 1473. She could not canonically have entered Dartford before she was thirteen. For her still being alive in 1512, see Lee, *Nunneries, Learning, and Spirituality*, 174.

34. *The Book of the Foundation of St. Bartholomew's Church in London*, ed. Norman Moore, EETS OS 163 (London: Oxford University Press, 1923), page 5, lines 24–25, a translation from c. 1400 of a twelfth-century Latin account of the foundation of hospital and church. Before Rahere built the foundation in 1123, the citizens of London already owned a chapel on the site for housing the sick, dedicated to the Holy Cross: see Nellie Kerling, "The Foundation of St. Bartholomew's Hospital in West Smithfield, London," *Guildhall Miscellany* 4, no. 3 (1972): 137–48.

35. London, British Library Lansdowne MS 874, ff. 3, 84, a sixteenth-century heraldic collection. See Cass, *South Mimms*, 110.

36. *Foundation of St. Bartholomew's Church*, 5.26–27, 31–34, punctuation modified. In the fifteenth century, there was a school for the orphans with a Latin master (Kerling, *Cartulary of St. Bartholomew's Hospital*, 3). It is unclear how large the hospital brotherhood was in the fifteenth century, but in the thirteenth century, the hospital had four chaplains who said Mass at the various chapels within the

precinct and three clerks. In the fourteenth century, six lay brethren are mentioned (Kerling, *Cartulary*, 7).

37. See Faye Getz, "John Mirfield (d. 1407)," in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004–), accessed July 3, 2013, doi:10.1093/ref:odnb/18817; Moore, *History of Bartholomew's Hospital*, 1.608–11.

38. In the same year, the hospital finally gained "almost complete independence" from the priory, which had earlier in the hospital's history sought to control actions and finances of the masters (Kerling, *Cartulary of St. Bartholomew's Hospital*, 2).

39. Anne Sutton and Livia Visser-Fuchs, "The Cult of Angels in Late Fifteenth-Century England," in *Women and the Book: Assessing the Visual Evidence*, ed. Lesley Smith and Jane H. M. Taylor (London: British Library; Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997), 230–65, at 243.

40. For Baron's involvements with Wakeryng, see Kerling, *Cartulary of St. Bartholomew's Hospital*, appendix 1, 153, nos. 17 and 18.

41. See Carole Rawcliffe, "The Hospitals of Later Medieval London," *Medical History* 28 (1984): 1–21, at 2.

42. The hospital was also attractive to the well-to-do but unattached elderly, who sometimes "handed over their property to the brethren" in exchange for "food and care" (Kerling, *Cartulary of St. Bartholomew's Hospital*, 9).

43. On entertainments at Clerkenwell, see Anne Begor Lancashire, *London Civic Theatre: City Drama and Pageantry from Roman Times to 1558* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 54–62. On St. Bartholomew's fair, see William Pate, ed., *The Victoria History of London*, vol. 1 of *The Victoria History of the Counties of England* (London: Constable, 1909), 475–80; and Stow, *Survey of London*, 1.104 and 2.27, for famous tournaments of the fourteenth century, some of which, Stow asserts, involved the city's sheriff and sergeants. On Smithfield, St. Bartholomew's, and the late thirteenth- or early fourteenth-century book London, British Library Royal MS 10.E.4 (the "Smithfield Decretals"), see Andrew Taylor, *Textual Situations: Three Medieval Manuscripts and Their Readers* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002), 137–96.

44. For Oxford, St. John's College MS 208, see Ralph Hanna, *A Descriptive Catalogue of the Western Medieval Manuscripts of St. John's College, Oxford* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 208–9. For Oxford, Bodleian Library MS 596, see Falconer Madon and H. H. E. Craster, eds., *Summary Catalogue of Western Manuscripts in the Bodleian Library at Oxford* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1922), no. 2376, 2.1.335–37. For an edition of "Parce michi domine" or "The Bird of Four Feathers," see Fein, *Moral Love Songs*, 269–88.

45. See Ralph Hanna, *English Manuscripts of Richard Rolle* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 2010), 155, item 84.

46. The fullest description is Hanna, *English Manuscripts*, who suggests that "some effort has gone on to tailor front matter to a collection of more substantial texts" (155), agreeing with Mooney, "Scribes and Booklets," that the first two quires may originally have been separate booklets.

47. For *Treatise of Ghostly Battle*, see Valerie Murray, "An Edition of *A Tretyse of Gostly Batayle and Milicia Christi*" (D.Phil. diss., Oxford University, 1970); Horstmann transcribes the text from Douce 322 in *Yorkshire Writers*, 2.420–36; see discussion in Chapter 4 for an account of this work. For *A Ladder of Foure Ronges*, see the edition by Phyllis Hodgson in *Deonise Hid Diunite*, EETS OS 236 (London: Oxford University Press, 1955). For *Emendatio vitae*, see Hugh Kempster, "*Emendatio vitae: Amending of Lyf*, a Middle English Translation, Edited from Dublin, Trinity College, MS 432" (Ph.D. diss., University of Waikato, 2007). Kempster rightly argues for the pastoral emphasis of Rolle's text and its reiteration in this somewhat free, amplified version.

48. On *Fervor amoris*, see *Contemplations of the Dread and Love of God*, ed.

Margaret Connolly, EETS OS 303 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993). For *Pore Caitiff*, see Mary Theresa Brady, “*The Pore Caitif*: Edited from MS Harley 2336 with Introduction and Notes” (Ph.D. diss., Fordham University, 1954), and “*The Pore Caitif*: An Introductory Study,” *Traditio* 10 (1954): 529–48.

49. Horstmann transcribes *Counsels of Isidore* from London, British Library Harley MS 1706, in *Yorkshire Writers*, 2.367–74. For *St. Brendan’s Confession*, see R. H. Bowers, “The Middle English *St. Brendan’s Confession*,” *Archiv* 175 (1939): 40–49; and Fumio Kuriyagawa, ed., *The Middle English “St. Brendan’s Confession and Prayer”*: *Edited from Lambeth Palace Library MS 541* (Tokyo: Keio Society of Art and Letters, Keio University, 1968). On forms of confession as a genre, see Michael Cornett, “The Form of Confession: A Later Medieval Genre for Examining Conscience” (Ph.D. diss., University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, 2011), esp. his discussion of *St. Brendan’s Confession* in chapter 2, 76–79.

50. See *Deonise Hid Diuinite*, 109.25–33.

51. Assuming we have the right William Baron (see n. 26 above), “nece” must here mean granddaughter.

52. See V. J. Scattergood, “Unpublished Middle English Poems from British Museum MS Harley 1706,” *English Philological Studies* 12 (1970): 35–39, at 38, lines 20–23.

53. John Lydgate, *Minor Poems of John Lydgate*, ed. Henry Noble MacCracken, 2 vols. EETS ES 107, OS 192 (1911 and 1934; repr., London: Oxford University Press, 1961–62), 2.655. See Willis J. Wager, “Two Poems from the ‘Booke of John Lucas,’” *Philological Quarterly* 15 (1936): 377–83.

54. London copies of the poem are Douce 322, London, British Library Harley MS 1706, and Cambridge, Trinity College MS R.3.21. The work also survives in Cambridge, University Library MS Ff.2.38, and Magdalene College Pepys MS 1584.

55. Gregory, *Moralia in Job* IV.12/23: “Beatus Job considerans, postquam a mentis statu succubuit genus humanum, quanta in rebus prosperis fiducia subleuetur, vel quanta ex adversis perturbatione frangatur, ad illum, quem habere in paradiso potuit, incommutabilitatis statum mente recurrit, et mortalitatis lapsum per prospera et adversa variantem” (Migne, *Patrologia Latina*, 75.650); translation from Gregory, *Morals on the Book of Job*, 3 vols. (Oxford: John Henry Parker, 1844), 1.200.

56. See discussion in Chapter 2.

57. Fein’s edition in *Moral Love Songs* is based on Douce. See also the unpublished edition by Karis Ann Crawford, “The Middle English *Pety Job*: A Critical Edition with a Study of Its Place in Late Medieval Religious Literature” (Ph.D. diss., University of Toronto, 1977), which also uses Douce 322 as its base text.

58. Psalms 5, 6, 7; 22, 24, 26; 39, 40, 41 respectively. The lessons are Job 7:16–21, 10:1–7, 13:22–28; 14:1–6, 14:13–16, 17:1–3; 17:11–15, 19:20–27, and 10:18–22. For a description of the office, see John Harper, *The Forms and Orders of Western Liturgy from the Tenth to the Eighteenth Century: A Historical Introduction and Guide for Students and Musicians* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 105–7. For a Middle English office of the dead, see Henry Littlehales, ed., *The Prymer or Lay Folks Prayer Book*, EETS OS 105 (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, and Trübner, 1895). For discussion of the place of the office in primers, see Alexandra Barrett, “The Prymer and Its Influence on Fifteenth-Century Passion Lyrics,” *Medium Aevum* 44 (1975): 264–79; and Kathryn A. Smith, *Art, Identity and Devotion in Fourteenth-Century England: Three Women and Their Books of Hours* (London: British Library: Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2003), esp. 249–94.

59. Littlehales, *Prymer or Lay Folks Prayer Book*, 170.

60. “The psalms dispersed between the nine lessons from Job all stress penance and trust in God’s justice, and they inevitably color the way we read the verses from

Job”: Lawrence Besserman, *The Legend of Job in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1979), 64.

61. That the poet employs the “difficult stanza form of *Pearl*” is noted, inter alia, by Susanna Fein in her “Twelve-Line Stanza Forms in Middle English and the Date of *Pearl*,” *Speculum* 72 (1997): 367–98, at 367, 383. For a contemporary treatment of the Lamentations that imports other materials (in this case, exempla), see the prose treatise *Dimitte me, domine* found in Cambridge, Magdalene College Pepys MS 2125, in Mayumi Taguchi, “A Middle English Penitential Treatise on Job 10:20–22, *Dimitte me, domine*,” *Mediaeval Studies* 67 (2005): 157–217.

62. *Pety Job*, lines 125–28; Job 10:5: “Nunquid sicut dies hominis die tui, et anni tui sicut humana sunt tempora?” (Are thy days as the days of man, and are thy years as the times of men?)

63. *Pety Job*, lines 109–14; Job 10:4: “Nunquid oculi carnei tibi sunt? Aut sicut videt homo, et tu vides?” (Hast thou eyes of flesh: or shalt thou see as man seeth?)

64. *Pety Job*, lines 667–68, 675–79; Job 10:21–22: “Dimitte ergo me, Domine, ut plangam paululum dolorem meum; antequam vadam, et non revertar, ad terram tenebrosam, et opertam mortis caligine. Terram miserie et tenebrarum, ubi umbra mortis et nullus ordo, sed sempiternus horror inhabitans” (Suffer me, therefore, that I may lament my sorrow a little: before I go and return no more, to a land that is dark and covered with the mist of death. A land of misery and darkness, where the shadow of death, and no order, but everlasting horror dwelleth).

65. *Pety Job*, lines 247–48; Job 13:25: “contra folium quod vento rapitur, ostendis potenciam tuam, et stipulam siccam persequeris” (Against a leaf, that is carried away with the wind, thou shewest thy power, and thou pursuest a dry straw).

66. *Pety Job*, lines 471–76; Job 17:11: “Dies mei transierunt; cogitationes meae dissipatae sunt, torquentes cor meum” (My days have passed away, my thoughts are dissipated, tormenting my heart).

67. See Fein's commentary on line 295 in *Moral Love Songs*.

68. *Pety Job*, lines 173–78; Job 10:10: “nonne sicut lac mulsiisti me, et sicut caseum me coagulasti?” (Hast thou not milked me as milk, and curdled me like cheese?)

69. *Pety Job*, lines 661–66; Job 10.20: “Nunquid non paucitas dierum meorum finietur brevi? Dimitte ergo me ut plangam paululum dolorem meum” (Shall not the fewness of my days be ended shortly? Suffer me, therefore, that I may lament my sorrow a little). The poet here follows Gregory's use of Ezechias in commenting on this verse: “the biblical Ezechias did not weep for contrition for his sins, but rather the shortness of his life.” See Crawford, “Middle English *Pety Job*,” 135–37; Fein, *Moral Love Songs*, 347, note to lines 354–58; 4 Kings 20, Isaiah 38.

70. *Pety Job*, lines 481–88; Job 17:12: “Noctem verterunt in diem, et rursum post tenebras spero lucem” (They have turned night into day, and after darkness I hope for light again).

71. Besserman, *Legend of Job*, 64.

72. *Pety Job*, lines 497–502; Job 17:13: “Si sustinuero, infernus domus mea est; in tenebris stravi lectulum meum” (If I wait hell is my house, and I have made my bed in darkness).

73. *Pety Job*, lines 101–2; there is no equivalent language in Job or the office of the dead.

74. *Pety Job*, lines 529–31, 547–50; Job 19:20: “Pelli mee, consumptis carnibus, adhesit os meum; et derelicta sunt tantummodo labia circa dentes meos” (The flesh being consumed, my bone hath cleaved to my skin, and nothing but lips are left about my teeth).

75. *Pety Job*, lines 557–64; Job 19:21–22: “Miseremini mei, miseremini mei, saltem vos, amici mei, quia manus Domini tetigit me. Quare persequimini me sicut Deus, et carnibus meis saturamini?” (Have pity on me, have pity on me, at least you my friends, because the hand of the Lord hath touched me. Why do you persecute me as God, and glut yourselves with my flesh?)

76. *Pety Job*, lines 613–16; Job 19:27: “Reposita est hec spes mea in sinu meo” (This my hope is laid up in my bosom).

77. *Pety Job*, lines 577–88; Job 19:23–4: “Quis michi tribuat ut scribantur sermones mei? Quis mihi det ut exarentur in libro, stilo ferreo, et plumbi lamina, vel certe sculpantur in silice?” (Who will grant me that my words may be written? Who will grant me that they may be marked down in a book? With an iron pen and in a plate of lead, or else be graven with an instrument in flint stone?)

78. Geoffrey Harpham, “Ascetics, Aesthetics, and the Management of Desire,” in *Religion and Cultural Studies*, ed. Susan L. Mizruchi (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2001), 95–109, at 98.

79. *Pety Job*, lines 65–66 and 320–22.

80. *Twelve Profits*, 2.391.

81. The *Tractatus de tribulatione* was at one time attributed to Peter of Blois. The French version of this *Tractatus*, *Livre de tribulacion*, circulated with ascetic literature for women, including the Anglo-Norman *Ancrene Wisse*, and in the fifteenth century was associated with high-profile laywomen such as Margaret of Burgundy, Joan de Holand, Eleanor Cobham (second wife of Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester), and Elizabeth de Vere, Countess of Oxford. Its mid-fifteenth-century Middle English translation has been edited by Alexandra Barrett as *The Book of Tribulation* (Heidelberg: Winter, 1983). The earlier translation of the *De duodecim utilitatibus* dates from the late fourteenth century and is found in two major lay manuscripts: London, British Library Royal MS 17.B.17 (along with verse didactic texts such as *The Lay Folks' Mass Book*, ed. Thomas Frederick Simmons. EETS OS 71 [London: Trübner, 1879]); and Oxford, Bodleian Library Laud Miscellaneous MS 210, a

sizeable West Midlands prose collection with London connections, one of whose short items is the *Visitation of the Sick* E. This earlier translation remains unedited. For bibliography, see Valerie Lagorio and Michael Sargent, "English Mystical Writings," in *A Manual of the Writings in Middle English*, ed. Albert E. Hartung, vol. 9 (New Haven, Conn.: Connecticut Academy of Arts and Sciences, 1993), item 81, 3127–28.

82. *Twelve Profits*, 2.391. For a detailed survey of patristic sources, motifs, and images that recur in late medieval tribulation texts, see Ralph Hanna, "Some Commonplaces of Late Medieval Patience," in *The Triumph of Patience: Medieval and Renaissance Studies*, ed. Gerald J. Schiffhorst (Orlando: University Presses of Florida, 1978), 65–87.

83. Michel Foucault, "On the Government of the Living (1980)," trans. Richard Townsend, in *Religion and Culture: Michel Foucault*, ed. Jeremy R. Carrette (New York: Routledge Press, 1999), 154–57, at 157. See also Michel Foucault, "About the Beginning of the Hermeneutics of the Self," *Political Theory* 21, no. 2 (1993): 198–227.

84. *Twelve Profits*, 2.399. The translation creates this discussion by rearranging materials from profits 4 and 5 in the *De utilitatibus*, separating originally integrated accounts of the knowledge of God and the self.

85. *Twelve Profits*, 2.393, 396–97.

86. *Twelve Profits*, 2.398.

87. *Twelve Profits*, 2.399.

88. For *St. Brendan's Confession* see above, n. 49. On self-shaping in confessional discourse, see Katherine C. Little, *Confession and Resistance: Defining the Self in Late Medieval England* (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 2006).

89. *Twelve Profits*, 2.399.

90. *Twelve Profits*, 2.399.

91. *Twelve Profits*, 2.400.

92. *Twelve Profits*, 2.406.

93. John Cassian, *Conferences*, trans. Colm Lubheid, *Classics of Western Spirituality* (New York: Paulist Press, 1985), 37–80.

94. *Emendatio vitae* chapters 7–12 respectively deal with prayer, reading, meditation, purity of heart, love, and contemplation: lines 549–1049 in Kempster's edition (see note 48). Guido uses the same four categories. Douce attributes *A Ladder of Fouer Ronges* and another short work to Adam the Carthusian.

95. See the edition by Dirk Schultze, ed., "*The Seven Points of True Love and Everlasting Wisdom*: A Middle English Translation of Henry Suso's *Horologium sapientiae*," Edited from Aberystwyth, National Library of Wales, Brogyntyn II.5" (Ph.D. diss.: Ernst-Moritz-Arndt-Universität, Greifswald, 2005). For excerpts of *Seven Points* in Love's *Mirror of the Blessed Life*, see 71–74. For a summary of the borrowings from Suso in the *Chastising*, see Joyce Bazire and Eric Colledge, eds., *The Chastising of God's Children and the Treatise of Perfection of the Sons of God* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1957), 44–46 (a more detailed account is given in the edition's explanatory notes). For the translations of the *Learn to Die* chapter, see Elizabeth Westlake, "Learn to Live and Learn to Die: Heinrich Suso's *Scire mori* in Fifteenth Century England" (Ph.D. diss., University of Birmingham, 1993), esp. 85–135. A recent general study of Suso in England is Steven Rozenski, "Henry Suso and Richard Rolle: Devotional Mobility and Translation in Late-Medieval England and Germany" (Ph.D. diss., Harvard University, 2012).

96. All references to *Learn to Die* are to Elizabeth Armstrong, "Heinrich Suso in England: An Edition of the 'Ars moriendi' from the *Seven Points of True Love*" (Ph.D. diss., Indiana University, 1966). Armstrong uses Oxford, Bodleian Library Tanner MS 398, which contains a complete copy of the *Seven Points*, as her base manuscript.

Armstrong, page 74, lines 4–5.

97. *Learn to Die*, 74.9–75.1.

98. *Learn to Die*, 77.9–12.

99. *Learn to Die*, 78.1–4.

100. *Learn to Die*, 84. 7–8, 93.10–12.

101. *Learn to Die*, 82.6–8.

102. Peter Lombard, *Sentences* 3, dist. 34, cap. 4.1, in *The Sentences Book 3: On the Incarnation of the Word*, trans. Giulio Silano (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 2008), from *Magistri Petri Lombardi Episcopi, Sententiae in IV libris distinctae* (Rome: Editiones Collegii S. Bonaventurae, ad Claras Aquas, 1971). Lombard is citing Augustine, *Enarrationes in psalmos*. Foundational studies of the role of love and compassion in the history of affective piety include André Wilmart, *Auteurs spirituels et textes dévots du moyen âge latin* (Paris: Bloud et Gay, 1932; repr. Paris: Etudes Augustiniennes, 1971); Richard Southern, *The Making of the Middle Ages* (1954; repr. New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1993), chapter 5, “From Epic to Romance” (210–44); and Richard Kieckhefer, *Unquiet Souls: Fourteenth Century Saints and Their Religious Milieu* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984).

103. Kempster, *Emendatio vitae*, 41–44, a passage that amplifies Rolle by adding material from the *Sentences*.

104. See James H. Marrow, *Passion Iconography in Northern European Art of the Late Middle Ages and Early Renaissance: A Study of the Transformation of Sacred Metaphor into Descriptive Narrative* (Kortrijk, Belgium: Van Ghemert, 1979), at 204. On this theme, see also Rachel Fulton, *From Judgment to Passion: Devotion to Christ and the Virgin Mary, 800–1200* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002); and Sarah McNamer, *Affective Meditation and the Invention of Medieval Compassion* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010).

105. The other faculties of the soul are the memory and the intellect. Medieval discussions of the powers of the soul and sense perception, and the relation between intellection and affection, are too complex to be more than mentioned here. Richard of Victor’s popular *Benjamin Minor*, which also circulated in a brief Middle English paraphrase, *A Tretyse of þe Stodye of Wisdom þat Men Clepen Beniamyn*, printed in *Deonise Hid Diuinite*, contains a concise summary of the division between the powers of the will and the intellect commonly found in late medieval devotional literature: “þorow reson we knowe, and þorow affeccioun we fele or love. Of reson springeþ rist counselles & goostly wittes, and of affeccioun springeþ goostly desires and ordeynd felynges” (102). For a succinct overview of late medieval scholastic and vernacular theologians’ conceptions of the affective faculty, see Vincent Gillespie, “Mystic’s Foot: Rolle and Affectivity,” in *Looking in Holy Books: Essays on Late Medieval Religious Writing in England* (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 2011), 199–230. See also Michelle Karnes, *Imagination, Meditation, and Cognition in the Middle Ages* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011). Douce contains several short passion meditations, including the poetic *Canticum amoris* near the beginning and the chapters of *Fervor amoris* and *Pore Caitif* near the end.

106. *Learn to Die*, 77.6–10.

107. “*The Book of Vices and Virtues*”: *A Fourteenth Century English Translation of the “Somme le roi,”* ed. W. Nelson Francis, EETS OS 217 (London: Oxford University Press, 1942), 70.31–71.3.

108. *Book of Vices*, 71.14–16. On scripted visions, see Barbara Newman, “What Did It Mean to Say I Saw? The Clash Between Theory and Culture in Medieval Visionary Culture,” *Speculum* 89 (2005): 1–43.

109. *Learn to Die*, 90.4–9.

110. *Learn to Die*, 94.3–7, punctuation modified.

111. *Learn to Die*, 91.1–2.
112. *Learn to Die*, 95.4–96.1.
113. *Learn to Die*, 96.4–15.
114. *Learn to Die*, 97.6–98.3. Wisdom here and throughout speaks as Christ; see Barbara Newman, “Henry Suso and the Medieval Devotion to Christ the Goddess,” *Spiritus: A Journal of Christian Spirituality*, 2, no. 1 (2002): 1–14.
115. *Learn to Die*, 98.9–10.
116. *Learn to Die*, 99.13–14, 99.17–100.1.
117. *Learn to Die*, 100.16–101.3. Compare the closing section of *Visitation A*: “Lord, Fader of hevene, the deth of Oure Lord, Ihesu Crist, this Sone, wiche is here imaged, I set betwene the & my evil dedis, & the desert of Ihesu Crist I offre for that I shuld have deseruid & have nou3t” (Robert Kinpoitner, “An Edition of *De visitacione infirmorum*” [Ph.D. diss., Fordham University, 1974], *Visitation A* 14.3–16.10).
118. *Learn to Die*, 102.2–15.
119. *Learn to Die*, 103.9–15, punctuation modified.
120. See the description in Linne Mooney, Simon Horobin, and Estelle Stubbs, “Late Medieval English Scribes,” *Late Medieval English Scribes*, <http://www.medievalscribes.com>, accessed June 26, 2013. See also Hanna, *English Manuscripts*, 155, item 84. The St. John’s MS 208, certainly used by Baron, is also dated to the third quarter of the fifteenth century by Hanna, *Descriptive Catalogue*, 208–9.
121. Mooney, “Scribes and Booklets,” 265, although this dating may have been influenced by the external evidence. G. R. Morgan dates Douce 322 to 1450–60 in “A Critical Edition of Caxton’s *The Art and Craft to Know Well to Die* and *Ars Moriendi* Together with the Antecedent Manuscript Material,” 2 vols. (D.Phil. diss., Oxford University, 1972), 7.
122. These manuscripts are discussed in Chapter 4.
123. Mooney, “Scribes and Booklets,” 265.
124. William Caxton, *The Book of Divers Ghostly Matters* (Westminster, 1491), f. c.iiiv (STC 3305).
125. Burrow, *Thomas Hoccleve*, 213–16.
126. This earlier version is found with a copy of the *Visitation E* alongside much else in a West Midlands book, Oxford, Bodleian Library Laud Miscellaneous MS 210, related to London, Westminster School Library MS 3, discussed in Chapter 1.
127. New Haven, Yale University Beinecke Library MS 493, and Oxford, Bodleian Library Laud Miscellaneous MS 735, both in the hand of the “*De Regimine Scribe*” (Mooney, Horobin, and Stubbs, “Late Medieval English Scribes.”
128. Mooney, Horobin, and Stubbs, “Late Medieval English Scribes.” On the later circulation of Hoccleve’s *Series*, see Rory G. Critten “‘Her heed they caste awry’: The Transmission and Reception of Thomas Hoccleve’s Personal Poetry,” *Review of English Studies* (2012): 1–24; and David Watt, *The Making of Thomas Hoccleve’s “Series”* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 2013), a study of the main manuscript copies of the work.
129. But see Rebecca Selman: “‘Learn to Die’ functions as both the motivating force behind the composition of the *Series* and the key to its interpretation” (“Voices and Wisdom: A Study of Henry Suso’s *Horologium sapientiae* in Some Late Medieval English Religious Texts” [Ph.D. diss., University of Exeter, 1998], 189). David Lorenzo Boyd and David Watt also present arguments that resonate with the discussion here. See David Lorenzo Boyd, “Reading Through the *Regiment of Princes*: Hoccleve’s *Series* and Lydgate’s *Dance of Death*,” *Fifteenth-Century Studies* 20 (1993): 15–34; and David Watt, “Compilation and Contemplation: Beholding Thomas Hoccleve’s *Series* in Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Seiden Supra 53,” *Journal of the*

Early Book Society 14 (2011): 1–40. Vincent Gillespie has recently argued that Hoccleve is aware of and interested in the reform project centering on the Council of Constance: Vincent Gillespie, “Chichele’s Church: Vernacular Theology in England After Thomas Arundel,” in Gillespie and Ghosh, *After Arundel*, 3–42, at 38–42. The complex nature of the reform at Constance is discussed in Chapter 4.

130. These arguments usually rest on an assumption that the *ars moriendi* was already an established and commonplace literary tradition, when in fact, as this study demonstrates, there were few examples of the genre circulating in Middle English before 1430. For an example, see the influential statement by Christina von Nolcken “O, why ne had y lerned for to die?": *Lerne for to Dye* and the Author’s Death in Thomas Hoccleve’s *Series*,” *Essays in Medieval Studies* 10 (1993): 27–51, who suggests that “Hoccleve reveals himself very much a child of his age” in displaying “late medieval culture’s obsessive concern with death” (29).

131. See, e.g., Lee Patterson, “‘What Is Me?': Hoccleve and the Trials of the Urban Self,” in *Acts of Recognition* (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 2010), 84–109; and Robert Meyer-Lee, *Poets and Power from Chaucer to Wyatt* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

132. See, e.g., D. C. Greetham, “Self-Referential Artifacts: Hoccleve’s Persona as a Literary Device,” *Modern Philology* 86, no. 3 (1989): 242–51.

133. All quotations (from *Complainte*, *Dialogue*, *Jonathas*, *Lerne to Dye*, and *Jerelaus*) are from Thomas Hoccleve, *Thomas Hoccleve: ‘My Complainte’ and Other Poems*, ed. Roger Ellis (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 2001): *Dialogue*, lines 239–40. Note that Ellis retains the Latin titles for *Jonathas* (*Fabula de quadam imperatrice Romana*); *Lerne to Dye* (*Ars utillissima sciendi mori*); and *Jerelaus* (*Fabula de quadam muliere mala*).

134. *Complainte*, lines 36–39.

135. *Complainte*, lines 57–58.

136. *Complainte*, lines 177, 180; see also lines 215–16.

137. *Complainte*, lines 202–3, 217–18.

138. *Complainte*, lines 78–84.

139. *Complainte*, lines 40–42, 50–51, 128, 131–33.

140. *Complainte*, lines 54–55.

141. *Complainte*, lines 232–33.

142. See A. G. Rigg, “Hoccleve’s *Complaint* and Isidore of Seville,” *Speculum* 45, no. 4 (1970): 564–74; also J. A. Burrow, “Hoccleve’s *Complaint* and Isidore of Seville Again,” *Speculum* 73, no. 2 (1998): 424–28. *Complainte*, lines 309–10, 315–16.

143. *Complainte*, lines 355–56, 358–59, 383–85.

144. *Complainte*, lines 407–8, 393, 400–406.

145. *Complainte*, lines 366–68.

146. *Complainte*, lines 372–74.

147. *Dialogue*, line 28.

148. *Dialogue*, lines 54–56, 81, 83–84, 96–98. Compare the *Twelve Profits’* account, drawing on Bernard, of how “God makith hym-self to be knowen in betynge” (2.398). For Hoccleve’s language here, see Chaucer, “Knight’s Tale,” 927–28, “The God of love, a benedicite! How myghty and how greet a lord is he!” lines borrowed for the first couplet of Sir John Clanvowe’s *Boke of Cupide*: see the edition in *Chaucerian Dream Visions and Complaints*, ed. Dana M. Symons (Kalamazoo, Mich.: published for TEAMS in Association with the University of Rochester by Medieval Institute Publications, 2004) 19–70, at 43.

149. *Dialogue*, lines 242, 246–47, 261–62.

150. *Dialogue*, lines 205–6, 235, 216, 207.

151. *Dialogue*, lines 235, 544.

152. On early deluxe French manuscripts and the French translation, see Eleanor

Spencer, "L'Horloge de sapience," *Scriptorium* 17, no. 2 (1963): 277–99. On French circulation of the work more generally, see Jeanne Ancelet-Hustache, "Quelques indications sur les manuscrits de l'horloge de sapience," in Heinrich Seuse, *Studien zum 600 Todestag (1366–1966)*, ed. E. M. Filthaut (Cologne: Albertus Magnus, 1966), 161–70.

153. Roger Ellis, "Chaucer, Christine de Pisan, and Hoccleve: The 'Letter of Cupid,'" in *Essays on Thomas Hoccleve*, ed. Catherine Batt, Westfield Publications in Medieval Studies 10 (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 1996), 29–54; Diane Bornstein, "French Influence on Fifteenth-Century English Prose as Exemplified by the Translation of Christine de Pisan's *Livre du corps de policie*," *Medieval Studies* 39 (1977): 369–86; and J.A. Burrow, "Hoccleve and the Middle French Poets," in *The Long Fifteenth Century: Essays for Douglas Gray*, ed. Helen Cooper and Sally Mapstone (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), 35–49.

154. *Dialogue*, lines 662–63.

155. *Jonathas*, line 1.

156. The *moralitas* of *Jerelaus* understands the empress in penitential terms, as the soul tainted by the sins done by the body. However, Hoccleve initially omits this *moralitas*, only adding it at the insistence of the friend, implying, as Selman notes, that he is "articulating some unease with its conventional interpretation" ("Voices and Wisdom," 210).

157. *Lerne to Dye*, lines 1–7.

158. Ellis, note on *Lerne to Dye*, line 917.

159. *Dialogue*, lines 218–24.

160. Suso's thirty-four hundred Latin words become seven thousand English ones, according to B. P. Kurtz, "The Relation of Occleve's *Lerne to Dye* to Its Source," *PMLA* 40 (1925): 252–75. For a discussion of Hoccleve's expansions, see Stephen Rozenski, "'Your Ensauample and Your Mirour': Hoccleve's Amplification of the Imagery and Intimacy of Henry Suso's *Ars Moriendi*," *Parergon* 25, no. 2 (2008).

161. *Lerne to Dye*, lines 597, 600–602, 702–3, 893, 895.

162. *Lerne to Dye*, lines 1001–5.

163. *Lerne to Dye*, lines 424–32.

164. See, for example, James Simpson's discussion of the *Series* and Hoccleve's social isolation in *Under the Hammer: Iconoclasm in the Anglo-American Tradition*, Clarendon Lectures in English (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 79–84, and in *The Oxford History of English Literature*, vol. 2, 1370–1547: *Reform and Cultural Revolution* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 429–44.

165. Richard Kieckhefer, "Convention and Conversion: Patterns in Late Medieval Piety," *Church History* 67, no.1 (1998): 32–51, at 26.

166. *Lerne to Dye*, lines 981–88.

167. *Lerne to Dye*, lines 505–8.

CHAPTER 4. WOUNDED TEXTS AND WORRIED READERS

1. See Chapter 2. See *Contemplations of the Dread and Love of God*, ed. Margaret Connolly, EETS OS 303 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993); Mary Teresa Brady, ed., "The *Pore Caitif*: Edited from MS Harley 2336 with Introduction and Notes" (Ph.D. diss., Fordham University, 1954); and Walter Hilton, *Walter Hilton's "Mixed Life": Edited from Lambeth Palace MS 472*, ed. S. J. Ogilvie-Thomson (Salzburg: Institut für Anglistik und Amerikanistik, Universität Salzburg, 1986). On another lay-oriented text with a contemplative bent in a different tradition, see Nicholas Watson, "Fashioning the Puritan Gentry-Woman: Devotion and Dissent in *A Book to a Mother*," in *Medieval Women: Texts and Contexts in Late Medieval Britain: Essays for*

Felicity Riddy, ed. Jocelyn Wogan-Browne et al. (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 2000), 169–84.

2. See Wendy Scase, “Reginald Pecock, John Carpenter and John Colop’s ‘Common-Profit’ Books: Aspects of Book Ownership and Circulation in Fifteenth-Century London,” *Medium Ævum* 61, no. 2 (1992): 261–74, at 267–68. See also H. S. Bennett, “The Production and Dissemination of Vernacular Manuscripts in the Fifteenth Century,” *Library*, 5th ser., 1 (1946–47): 167–79; Michael Sargent, “Walter Hilton’s ‘Scale of Perfection’: The London Manuscript Group Reconsidered,” *Medium Ævum* 52 (1983): 189–216.

3. Ralph Hanna, *London Literature, 1300–1380* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005); and Fiona Somerset, *Feeling like Saints: Lollard Writing and the History of English Religion* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2014).

4. See Allan Westphal, “Reconstructing the Mixed Life in Reginald Pecock’s *The Reule of Crysten Religioun*,” in *After Arundel: Religious Writing in Fifteenth-Century England*, ed. Vincent Gillespie and Kantik Ghosh (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 2011), 267–84.

5. An exception may be Carpenter’s copy of Julianus Pomerius’s *De contemplativa vita*, although this work is as much about spiritual governance as the ascetic life. See Chapter 2.

6. My use of the term “perfectionist” is indebted to Nicholas Watson. See, e.g., his “*Piers Plowman*, Pastoral Theology, and Spiritual Perfectionism: Hawkyn’s Cloak and Patience’s Pater Noster,” *Yearbook of Langland Studies* 21 (2007): 83–118.

7. See Caxton’s 1491 *The Book of Divers Ghostly Matters* (STC 3305) and his 1492 *The Chastising of God’s Children* (STC 5065); see Wynkyn de Worde’s 1494 edition of Hilton’s *Scala perfectionis* (STC14042), and his 1506 and 1519 editions of *Fervor amoris*, published under the title *Contemplations of the Dread and Love of God* and ascribed to Richard Rolle (STC 21259, STC 21260). On “spiritual ambition” and several of these works, see Nicole Rice, *Lay Piety and Religious Discipline in Middle English Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), esp. chapter 1.

8. See Berndt Hamm, *The Reformation of Faith in the Context of Late Medieval Theology and Piety: Essays by Berndt Hamm*, ed. Robert James Bast (Leiden: Brill, 2004); and John van Engen, *Sisters and Brothers of the Common Life: The Devotio Moderna and the World of the Later Middle Ages* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008).

9. Hamm, *Reformation of Faith*, 88–127.

10. Hamm, *Reformation of Faith*, 98, n. 29.

11. Hamm, *Reformation of Faith*, 107; Henrich Seuse, *Horologium sapientiae*, ed. Pius Künzle (Freiburg, Switzerland: Universitätsverlag, 1977), 1.14; Dirk Schultze, ed., “*The Seven Points of True Love and Everlasting Wisdom*: A Middle English Translation of Henry Suso’s *Horologium sapientiae*, Edited from Aberystwyth, National Library of Wales, Brogyntyn II.5” (Ph.D. diss., Ernst-Moritz-Arndt-Universität, Greifswald, 2005), page 341, lines 17–39.

12. Walter Hilton, *The Scale of Perfection*, ed. Thomas H. Bestul (Kalamazoo, Mich.: published for TEAMS in Association with the University of Rochester by Medieval Institute Publications, 2000), book 2, chapter 5, lines 211–13.

13. See Nicholas Watson, “Despair,” in *Cultural Reformations: Medieval and Renaissance in Literary History*, edited by Brian Cummings and James Simpson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 342–57.

14. On East Anglia and Margery Kempe, see Gail McMurray Gibson, *The Theater of Devotion: East Anglian Drama and Society in the Late Middle Ages* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989); and Theresa Coletti, *Mary Magdalene and the Drama of Saints: Theater, Gender, and Religion in Late Medieval England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004).

15. Eamon Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England, 1400–1580*, 2nd ed. (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2005).

16. Jennifer Bryan, *Looking Inward: Devotional Reading and the Private Self in Late Medieval England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008).

17. Mary Carpenter Erler, *Women, Reading, and Piety in Late Medieval England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002); and Felicity Riddy, "'Women Talking About the Things of God': A Late Medieval Subculture," in *Women and Literature in Britain, 1150–1500*, ed. Carole M. Meale (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 104–27.

18. See G. R. Morgan, "A Critical Edition of Caxton's *The Art and Craft to Know Well to Die* and *Ars moriendi* Together with the Antecedent Manuscript Material," 2 vols. (D.Phil. diss., Oxford University, 1972). Quotations from *The Book of the Craft of Dying* are taken from the critical edition that makes up part of the second volume of this thesis. Those from the *Tractatus* are taken from *Tractatus de arte bene moriendi* (Paris: Guy Marchant, 1499). Those from the *Opusculum tripartitum* are taken from Jean Gerson, *Gerson bilingue: Les deux rédactions, latine et française, de quelques oeuvres du chancelier parisien*, ed. Gilbert Ouy (Paris: Champion, 1998). I have not attempted to identify the Latin manuscript from which *The Craft of Dying* was translated.

19. On the development and circulation of the "Quamvis secundum," see Sister Mary Catherine O'Connor, *The Art of Dying Well: The Development of the Ars moriendi* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1942); "Quamvis secundum" is O'Connor's name for this text, taken from the incipit.

20. The manuscripts in order of their estimated dates are: Notre Dame, Ind., University of Notre Dame MS 67 (1430s?); Oxford, Bodleian Library MS 423 (1430–50); Manchester, John Rylands Library English MS 94 (1430–50); London, British Library Additional MS 10596 (1450–60); Oxford, Bodleian Library Douce MS 322 (1450–75); London, British Library Harley MS 1706 (1475–1500); Cambridge, University Library MS Ff.5.45 (1475–1500); London, British Library Royal MS 17.C.xviii (1475–1500); Oxford, Bodleian Library Rawlinson MS C.894 (1475–1500); Oxford, Corpus Christi College MS 220 (1475–1500); London, British Library Harley MS 4011 (1475–1500). Chicago, University of Illinois, Chicago MS 80, and London, British Library Lansdowne MS 762, contain extracts from the prayers. Cambridge, University Library MS Kk.1.5 (1500), contains an independent Scottish translation of the *Tractatus*. Descriptions are in Morgan, "Critical Edition."

21. See, for example, the Hilton and tribulation materials in Rawlinson C.894 and Royal 17.C.xviii, manuscripts discussed in more detail below. Love's *Mirror* appears with the *Craft of Dying* in Rylands English 94.

22. Caxton, *Here begynneth a lityll treatise shorte and abredged spekyng of the arte [and] crafte to knowe well to dye* (1490), (STC 789); Caxton, *Here begynneth a lityll treatise schortely compyled and called ars moriendi that is to saye the craft for to deye for the helthe of mannes sowle* (1491), (STC 786). On these texts and editions, see Morgan, "Critical Edition," 2.242–43, and below, note 111.

23. See below, note 111, for discussion of the printed works in the *Tractatus* traditon.

24. Paul Strohm, *Politique: Languages of Statecraft Between Chaucer and Shakespeare*, Conway Lectures in Medieval Studies (Notre Dame, Ind: University of Notre Dame Press, 2005), 140.

25. *Book of the Craft of Dying*, 2.3–15 (hereafter *The Craft of Dying*). (Here and below I have felt free to modify Morgan's punctuation.)

26. *The Craft of Dying* 8.15–9.1; 10.7; 26.6–7; 29.8–9; 50.6–7; 55.6–7; 2.10–12.

27. Vincent Gillespie, "1412–1534: Culture and History," in *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval English Mysticism*, ed. Samuel Fanous and Vincent Gillespie (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 163–94, at 180.

28. *The Craft of Dying*, 18.2–8. See also chapter 4, which begins by listing the five things Christ did while dying on the cross, each of which is recommended to the reader or dying person for imitation.

29. *The Craft of Dying*, 7.10–8.4.

30. *The Craft of Dying*, 50.8, 48.1.

31. *The Craft of Dying*, 53.3–10.

32. *The Craft of Dying*, 8.4, 7–10.

33. *The Craft of Dying*, 36.11–13, 49.7–8.

34. *The Craft of Dying*, 49.12–50.2.

35. *The Craft of Dying*, 52.7–11.

36. *The Craft of Dying*, 54.2–4.

37. Douce 322, f.1v; see Chapter 3.

38. *The Craft of Dying*, 9.11–10.1.

39. *The Craft of Dying*, 31.11–32.6.

40. *The Craft of Dying*, 55.8–56.8.

41. For the custom of “beating of the board,” see David Knowles, ed. and trans., *Monastic Constitutions of Lanfranc* (London: Oxford University Press, 1951), 122–24; see also John F. Benton, trans., *Self and Society in Medieval France: The Memoirs of Abbot Guibert of Nogent* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1984), 103: “And so as the dead of night drew near, he lost all feeling of pain and lay stretched as dead on the ground. Summoned by the beating of the wooden signal, we went through the psalms, prayers, and all that can help those about to die. After we had done this, we left the man lying on a sackcloth, as is the monastic custom, since he seemed to be breathing his last gasps. None of us believed he would live, but all expected the final washing of his dead body.”

42. Initially used to describe a group of monks or nuns, by the early fifteenth century the word “covent” had been repurposed by texts such as the Wycliffite Bible to designate any assembly of people gathered for a common purpose. See Middle English Dictionary s.v., *convent* 1.a.

43. *The Craft of Dying*, 46.1–3, 46.14–47.1.

44. See Chapter 1.

45. *The Craft of Dying*, 56.9–57.2.

46. *The Craft of Dying*, 3.12–14, 4.2, 8–14.

47. *The Craft of Dying*, 16.2–12.

48. *The Craft of Dying*, 26.11–27.3. Morgan cites Duns Scotus, *Quaestiones in Liber IV. Sententiarum*, d. 21, q. 1, “Vtrum post hanc vitam possit aliquod peccatum dimitti?” (in *Opera Omnia*, ed. Lucas Wadding, 12 vols. [Lyons: Lawrence Durand, 1639], 9.423).

49. *The Craft of Dying*, 19.14–20.3, 21.1–4.

50. *The Craft of Dying*, 46.4–5, 11.

51. *The Craft of Dying*, 23.11–13.

52. *The Craft of Dying*, 25.1–7. On the difficulty of finding a middle ground between despair and singularity, and on the fifteenth-century intensification of “scrupulosity,” see the final chapter of Sven Grosse, *Heilungswißheit und Scrupulositas im späten Mittelalter: Studien zu Johannes Gerson und Gattungen der Frömmigkeitstheologie seiner Zeit* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1994).

53. *The Craft of Dying*, 30.15–31.2. Note also the prayers in chapters 4 and 6, which return to this general theme.

54. *The Craft of Dying*, 36.7–9.

55. The only full-length study in English on the textual tradition is O'Connor, *Art of Dying Well*, which continues to ground most Anglo-American scholarship on the *ars moriendi* genre and the *Tractatus* tradition, despite the availability of Rainer Rudolf's important bibliographic study, *Ars moriendi: Von der Kunst des heilsamen*

Lebens und Sterbens (Cologne: Böhlau, 1957).

56. *Tractatus*, A.2r (punctuation modified); *Opusculum tripartitum*, 84; *The Craft of Dying*, 2.6–13. As often, the *Craft* is somewhat expansive, its habit of doubling terms (“matere and tretys”) and adding clarifying glosses (e.g., “in the insyght of mannes sowle”) typical of fifteenth-century English prose translation. See Samuel Klinger Workman, *Fifteenth-Century Translation as an Influence on English Prose* (New York: Octagon Books, 1972).

57. *Tractatus*, B.2r; *The Craft of Dying*, 32.9–10. There is a second reference to Gerson in chapter 5 (*Tractatus*, B.5r).

58. O'Connor, *Art of Dying Well*, 50–51. For Gerson's influence on German catechesis, see Robert Bast, *Honor Your Fathers: Catechisms and the Emergence of a Patriarchal Ideology in Germany, 1400–1600* (Leiden: Brill, 1997), chapter 1.

59. See Ouy in Gerson, *Gerson Bilingue*, xv–li, esp. xvii–xxi, positing a date before 1413 for the French texts and probably before 1408 for the Latin.

60. See, for example, Brian Patrick McGuire, *Jean Gerson and the Last Medieval Reformation* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2005); and more recently, Vincent Gillespie's discussion of the influence of Gerson's reformist thought in England, “Chichele's Church: Vernacular Theology in England After Thomas Arundel,” in Gillespie and Ghosh, *After Arundel*, 3–42, at 25–26. But see also Daniel Hobbins's discussion of the relative paucity of surviving fifteenth-century English manuscripts of Gerson's works and the strained relations between Gerson and the English church at the time of Constance: “England represented for Gerson the convergence of a triple threat to France, political, theological, and social” (*Authorship and Publicity Before Print: Jean Gerson and the Transformation of Late Medieval Learning* [Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009], at 213–16 and at 13).

61. David Luscombe, “John Gerson and Hierarchy,” in *Church and Chronicle in the Middle Ages: Essays Presented to John Taylor*, ed. Ian Wood and G. A. Loud (London: Hambledon Press, 1991), 193–200, at 198.

62. Miri Rubin, “Europe Remade: Purity and Danger in Late Medieval Europe,” *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 6th ser., 11 (2001): 101–24, at 107, citing Gerson's “Contra conclusiones Mathaei Graben O.P.” (1418) and his more popular *De perfectione cordis* (1421), a dialogue between a theologian and a Christian soul (*anima Christiani*) which became a favorite in the Common Life movement (see van Engen, *Sisters and Brothers*, 217). For the parallel with Wycliffe, see van Engen, *Sisters and Brothers*, 313–14.

63. Luscombe, “John Gerson and Hierarchy,” 195, n. 9, and 198–99. Early monasticism of course understood itself as a lay movement. On Gerson, see also Zenon Kaluža, “Le Chancelier Gerson et Jérôme de Prague,” *Archives d'histoire doctrinale et littéraire du Moyen Âge* 59 (1984): 81–126; and *Les Querelles doctrinales à Paris: Nominalistes et realists aux confins du XIVe et du XVe siècles* (Bergamo: Pierluigi Lubrina, 1988).

64. See Brian Patrick McGuire, “When Jesus Did the Dishes: The Transformation of Late Medieval Spirituality,” in *The Making of Christian Communities in Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages*, ed. Mark F. Williams (London: Anthem Press, 2005), 131–52.

65. *Opus tripartitum*, 6.

66. For “Avisata,” see O'Connor, *Art of Dying Well*, 51 and references.

67. *Opusculum tripartitum*, 6.

68. Margaret Aston, *Lollards and Reformers: Images and Literacy in Late Medieval Religion* (London: Hambledon Press, 1984), 107.

69. *Opusculum tripartitum*, 84, 90.

70. *Opusculum tripartitum*, 8 (preface to *De preceptis*) and 84 (preface to *De scientia*

mortis).

71. *Tractatus*, A.2r. The first sentences of *De scientia mortis* dealing with the amicitia theme are among the few passages of Gerson's text not taken over in the *Tractatus*.

72. *Tractatus*, B.2r, B.6v, etc.

73. *Tractatus*, A.2r.

74. *Tractatus*, B.1r. The Anselm questions are said to be "solum personis religiosis atque deuotis competere atque sufficere" ("competent & sufficient to religious & devout persons") (*Tractatus*, A.8v; *The Craft of Dying*, 32.7–8).

75. *Tractatus*, B.1r.

76. See *Opusculum tripartitum*, 86–88.

77. *Tractatus*, B.1v.

78. *Tractatus*, B.1r.

79. *The Craft of Dying*, 33.6–13.

80. Compare *Opusculum tripartitum*, 86: "Petis a deo veniam peccatorum tuorum commissorum et omissorum, quod contra eius amorem, maiestatem atque bonitatem egeris, nec eum prout debebas honorasti?" The last clause has no equivalent in the *Tractatus*.

81. Compare *Opusculum tripartitum*, 86: "Optansne etiam cor tuum illuminari ad oblitum criminum, si que sint, habendam notitiam, et si tu libenter confiteris ea?"

82. *Tractatus*, B.1r–v. Compare *Opusculum tripartitum*, 86: "Habesne sincerum propositum et explicitam voluntatem vitam tuam in melius commutare atque corrigere si vita comes superfuerit? Rogas etiam Deum ut tibi gratiam prestat hoc propositum continuandi, et non recidivandi veramque contritionem habendi?"

83. *The Craft of Dying*, 33.14–35.3.

84. *Opusculum tripartitum*, 86.

85. *Tractatus*, B.1v–2r.

86. *Opusculum tripartitum*, 86; *Tractatus*, B.1r.

87. *The Craft of Dying*, 32.13–33.5.

88. *Tractatus*, A.4r; *The Craft of Dying*, 11.13–12.6.

89. The *Tractatus* is also ascribed in several manuscripts to Johannes Nider (d. 1438), prior of the Dominican monastery in Basel, who studied and lived in Vienna and Cologne and twice served as dean of the University of Vienna; and to Dietrich Engelhus, reformer, schoolmaster, and doctor of divinity (d. 1434), whose major work is a Latin chronicle, known under the title *Chronicon continens res et ecclesiae Reipublicae*. On Engelhus, see Udo Kühne, *Engelhus-Studien: Zur Göttinger Schulliteratur in der ersten Hälfte des 15. Jahrhunderts* (Freiburg: Universitätsverlag Freiburg Schweiz, 1999). A number of other ascriptions are unworkable for reasons of date: the *Tractatus* was almost certainly written too late to be by Matthew of Cracow (d. 1410), chancellor of the University of Prague, and too early to be by the Carthusian Jacobus de Clusa (d. 1465). See O'Connor, *Art of Dying Well*, 49–51 and list of Latin manuscripts for ascriptions, 61–112.

90. O'Connor, *Art of Dying Well*, 55–60; and Rainer Rudolf, "Ars moriendi," in *Theologische Realenzyklopädie* vol. 4 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1979), 143–56. Alois Madre, *Nikolaus von Dinkelsbühl Leben und Schriften: Ein Beitrag zur theologischen Literaturgeschichte* (Münster: Aschendorffsche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1965), 292–95, lists the work under von Dinkelsbühl's *dubia*.

91. See Denis D. Martin, *Fifteenth-Century Carthusian Reform: The World of Nicholas Kempf* (Leiden: Brill, 1992), 42, 54.

92. According to Rudolf, "Ars moriendi." Even more Latin and German copies, sixty in all, derive from Münster in the Rhineland.

93. See Gillespie, "Chichele's Church"; and Jeremy Catto, "After Arundel: The Closing or the Opening of the English Mind?" in Gillespie and Ghosh, *After Arundel*,

94. Kantik Ghosh, “Logic, Scepticism and ‘Heresy’ in Early Fifteenth-Century Europe: Oxford, Vienna, Constance,” in *Uncertain Knowledge: Interdisciplinary Conversations About Doubt and Scepticism in the Middle Ages*, ed. Dallas G. Denery II, Kantik Ghosh, and Nicolette Zeeman (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 2014), and “University-Learning, Theological Method and Heresy in Fifteenth-Century England,” in *Situating Religious Controversy: Textual Transmission and Networks of Readership, 1378–1536*, ed. Michael van Dussen and Pavel Soukup (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 2013). See also Nicholas Watson, “‘A clerke schulde have it of kinde for to kepe counsell,’” in Gillespie and Ghosh, *After Arundel*, 563–89, at 584–85.

95. As Martin argues, “the territorial princes had an interest in establishing a reformed monasticism that would be less closely tied to the aristocracy; in German-speaking areas monastic reform was thus often part of the emergent centralizing territorial state” (*Fifteenth-Century Carthusian Reform*, 61).

96. Christine Glassner, “Stift Melk und die Melker Reform im. 15 Jahrhundert,” in *Die benediktinische Klosterreform im 15. Jahrhundert*, ed. Franz Xaver Bischof and Martin Thurner (Berlin: Akademie, 2013), 75–82.

97. For a list of Dinkelsbühl’s pastoral works, see “Zweites Kapitel: Tractatus octo,” in Madre, *Nikolaus von Dinkelsbühl*, 162–202. For biography and listing of works of Peuntner, see Bernhard Schnell, *Thomas Peuntner: Büchlein von der Liebhabung Gottes* (Munich: Artemis, 1984). For a discussion of lay readership of pastoralia, see Klaus Schreiner, “Laienfrömmigkeit—Frömmigkeit von Eliten oder Frömmigkeit des Volkes?” in *Laienfrömmigkeit im späten Mittelalter: Formen, Funktionen, politisch-soziale Zusammenhänge*, ed. Klaus Schreiner (Munich: Oldenbourg, 1992), 1–78. On Dinkelsbühl’s *Reformationis methodus*, see the recent discussion by James D. Mixson, *Poverty’s Proprietors: Ownership and Mortal Sin at the Origins of the Observant Movement* (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 137–39 and 164–65.

98. *Tractatus*, B.6v; *The Craft of Dying*, 56.9–10.

99. *Tractatus*, B.4r–5r; *The Craft of Dying*, 44.3–9, 46.2–5.

100. *Tractatus*, B.4r; *The Craft of Dying*, 45.12–13.

101. *Tractatus*, B.6r–v; *The Craft of Dying*, 54.6–55.5.

102. Gillespie, “Chichele’s Church”; and Catto, “Closing and Opening,” in Gillespie and Ghosh, *After Arundel*.

103. A study of the early English reception of the Latin *Tractatus* is much needed, but for now, O’Connor’s list of Latin copies of *Tractatus* remains of interest, although it is not exhaustive and is organized according to modern library location only (*Art of Dying Well*, 61–112).

104. *The Craft of Dying*, 32.9–10, 46.10.

105. On Notre Dame MS 67, formerly the Foyle manuscript, see Jill Mann and Maura Nolan, eds., *The Text in the Community: Essays on Medieval Works, Manuscripts, Authors, and Readers* (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 2006), esp. A. S. G. Edwards, “The Contents of Notre Dame” (67–128). Ralph Hanna associates the decoration in the Notre Dame MS with the 1430s in “Middle English Books and Middle English Literary History,” *Modern Philology* 102, no. 2 (2004), 157–78, at 177. Paul Patterson’s edition of *Speculum devotorum* also offers a useful account of the manuscript and its composition history: “*Myrror to Devout People (Speculum devotorum)*: An Edition with Commentary” (Ph.D. diss., University of Notre Dame, 2006), 1–8.

106. See Edwards, “Contents of Notre Dame,” 67, noting the change in scribe and the book’s probable lay ownership by Elizabeth or John Scrope.

107. See A. I. Doyle, “Books Connected with the Vere Family and Barking Abbey,” *Transactions of the Essex Archaeological Society*, 35, no. 2 (1958): 222–43.

The other two copies in books associated with Dominicans are Cambridge, University Library MS Ff.5.45, and London, British Library Additional MS 10596. For a discussion of the latter in relation to women's reading at Barking, see Nicole Rice, "'Temples to Christ's Indwelling': Forms of Chastity in a Barking Abbey Manuscript," *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 19, no. 1 (2010): 115–32.

108. Vincent Gillespie discusses the shared scribe in "Vernacular Books of Religion," in *Book Production and Publishing in Britain, 1375–1475*, ed. Jeremy Griffiths and Derek Pearsall (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 317–44, at 327, 342, nn. 50–51. On Royal 17.C.viii and Rawlinson C.894, see most recently E. A. Jones, "The Compilation(s) of Two Late Medieval Devotional Manuscripts," in *Text and Controversy from Wyclif to Bale: Essays in Honor of Anne Hudson*, ed. Helen Barr and Ann M. Hutchison (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 2005), 79–97.

109. Rylands English MS 94, whose metropolitan origins Hanna argues for in "Middle English Books," at 176, bears the name "William Northampton." Also related textually is London, British Library Harley MS 4011, which can be linked via ownership signature to an Augustinian canonry in Shropshire.

110. Nicole Rice, "Profitable Devotions: Bodley MS 423, Guildhall MS 7114, and a Sixteenth-Century London Pewterer," *Journal of the Early Book Society* 10 (2007): 175–83. On Dodesham, see A.I. Doyle, "Stephen Dodesham of Witham and Sheen," in *Of the Making of Books: Medieval Manuscripts, Their Scribes and Readers: Essays Presented to M. B. Parkes*, ed. P. R. Robinson and Rivkah Zim (Aldershot, England: Scolar Press, 1997), 94–115; Doyle discusses MS Bodley 423 at 103. See also Morgan, "Critical Edition," 1.60.

111. STC 789 and 790 (*Art and Craft*); 786, 787, 788 (*Ars moriendi*); 791, 792 (*L'art de bien mourir*). On Tardif, see Mary Beth Winn, "Guillaume Tardif's Hours for Charles VIII and Verard's Grandes Heures Royales," *Bibliothèque d'Humanisme et Renaissance* 56 (1994): 347–83; on Vérard, see Mary Beth Winn, *Anthoine Vérard: Parisian Publisher, 1485–1512: Prologues, Poems, and Presentations* (Paris: Librairie Droz, 1997). The Vérard translation, into a Scots dialect, is by Thomas Lewynton, a Scottish resident of Paris: see Frank Stubbings, "The Art of Good Living (STC 791)," *Transactions of the Cambridge Bibliography Society* 10 (1994): 535–38. The other translation is by one of de Worde's regular translators, Andrew Chertsey.

112. Besides these printed works, a Latin and English work related to the *Tractatus* was owned by a Syon nun in the early sixteenth century. The work, which I have not seen, appears in Cambridge, Magdalene College MS 13, a book of prayers partly copied by Jasper Fyloll, who includes his name and the birthdates of his siblings on a flyleaf, and is signed by "Elisabeth Crychley off Syon 13 Jan ann. 1521." Described as in "Latin and English," it is headed "The exortacions of Master Gerson to folkis in the poynte of dethe with questions and polecies, counsayles, and prayers to the same in tyme of his lye and prayers after hys dethe" (f. 138). See M. R. James, *A Descriptive Catalogue of the Manuscripts in the College Library of Magdalene College, Cambridge* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1909), 32. On Fyloll, who became an employee of Thomas Cromwell and had some role in the dissolution of the London Charterhouse, see Richard Rex, "Jasper Fyloll and the Enormities of the Clergy: Two Tracts Written During the Reformation Parliament," *Sixteenth-Century Journal* 31 (2000): 1043–62.

113. The two others are Harley MS 1706, a copy of Douce MS 322, and Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 142.

114. "Wherfor my counselle ys that thow departe thy soule frome thy body by inwarde thoughte; and to sende thy herte, whyche ys thy most lovyde and trusty frende, before.... Sende thyne herte in to helle.... More-over sende thyne herte in to purgatory.... Now sende thy herte in to hevyne" (Carl Horstmann, ed., *Yorkshire*

Writers: *Richard Rolle of Hampole, an English Father of the Church, and His Followers*, 2 vols. [London: Swan Sonnenschein, 1895–96], 2.428, 431, 433). Compare *Tower of All Towers* in *Book of Vices and Virtues*, ed. W. Nelson Francis, EETS OS 217 (London: Oxford University Press, 1942), 70.31–71.3, esp. the passage quoted in Chapter 3.

115. On *L'Art de bien vivre*, see Andrew Colin Gow, *The Red Jews: Antisemitism in an Apocalyptic Age, 1200–1600* (Leiden: Brill, 1994), 116.

116. *Treatise of Ghostly Battle*, in Horstmann, *Yorkshire Writers*, 2.428.

117. PRO, Prob. 11/14/698. Transcriptions of wills that follow are lightly punctuated for clarity, although original punctuation is kept where possible.

118. PRO, Prob. 11/14/566. For issues around discerning spiritual attitudes from the often conventional language of late medieval and early modern wills, see Clive Burgess, “Late Medieval Wills and Pious Convention: Testamentary Evidence Reconsidered,” in *Profit, Piety and the Profession in Later Medieval England*, ed. Michael A. Hicks (Gloucester: Sutton, 1990), 14–33; and J. D. Alsop, “Religious Preambles in Early Modern English Wills as Formulae,” *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 40, no. 1 (1989): 19–27.

119. See *Middle English Dictionary*, s.v. “untestat.” The other example is from the sermon cycle *Jacob’s Well*, early fifteenth century.

120. Julia Boffey, *Manuscript and Print in London c. 1475–1530* (London: British Library, 2012), 157.

121. Reginald M. Glencross, *Administration in the Prerogative Court of Canterbury, 1559–71*, 2 vols. (Exeter: Pollard, 1912), 1.31, 33. Harlowe’s creditors are named as Thomas Godfrey, George Elsdon, and “Stapleton.” See Bruce W. Bannerman, *The Registers of St. Mary the Virgin, Aldermanbury, London*, Publications of the Harleian Society Registers, vol. 61, 62, 65 (London: Mitchell and Hughes, 1931–35), 61.22. See also Morgan, “Critical Edition,” 1.33.

122. A William Harlowe twice appears in the records of the Scriveners’ guild during the 1550s: see Francis W. Steer, ed., *Scriveners’ Company Common Paper, 1357–1628: With a Continuation to 1678* (London: London Records Society, 1968), 72–73. It is, unfortunately, unclear whether this is the same William Harlowe.

123. Elizabeth Harlowe is named as the daughter of William Harlowe in a document granting her arms in March 1561–62, according to W. H. Rylands, *Grantees of Arms to the End of the XVIIth Century*, Publications of the Harleian Society 66 (London: n.p., 1915), 114. The *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* entry for her husband, Sir Martin Bowes, incorrectly names her father as Thomas: see C. E. Challis, “Bowes, Sir Martin (1496/7–1566),” *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004–), accessed July 3, 2013, doi:10.1093/ref:odnb/3055. For her first marriage, see *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* entry for her son, the mathematician and London mayor, Sir Henry Billingsley (d. 1606): Anita McConnell, “Sir Henry Billingsley (d. 1606),” *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, accessed July 3, 2013, doi:10.1093/ref:odnb/2392.

124. John Lough, *Reminiscences of John Louth*, in *Narratives of the Days of the Reformation, Chiefly from the Manuscripts of John Foxe, the Martyrologist*, ed. John Gough Nicholas (London: Camden Society, 1859), 41, quoted, with discussion, in Elaine V. Beilin, ed., *The Examinations of Anne Askew*, *Women Writers in English* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), xxxvii.

125. A Thomas Robert was a Crown auditor, 1509–13. For the Robertses of Willesdon, see Jessica Rosemary Freeman, “The Political Community of Fifteenth-Century Middlesex” (Ph.D. diss., University of London, 2002), 111–14; Edgar Powell, “Roberts and Horde Families,” *Genealogist*, n.s., 2 (1885): 46–47. For a recent and detailed study of other books owned by the Roberts family, see Margaret Connolly, “Sixteenth-Century Readers Reading Fifteenth-century Religious Books: The Roberts Family of Middlesex,” in *Religious Writing in Practice*, edited by Nicole Rice

(Turnout, Belgium: Brepols, 2013), 239–62.

126. Manchester, John Rylands Library English MS 98, and London, British Library Harley MS 2322. See Catherine Innes-Parker, “The ‘Gender Gap’ Reconsidered: Manuscripts and Readers in Late-Medieval England,” *Studia Anglica Posnaniensia: International Review of English Studies* 38 (2002): 239–69.

127. *The Craft of Dying*, 52.1–6.

128. *The Craft of Dying*, 26.5–11. The explicit instruction to keep wives from the dying is of interest in relation to documentary evidence that women were the primary caregivers of the sick; see the Introduction.

129. Vêrard, *Art of Good Lywyng (L’Art de bien mourir)*, ff. P.4v (text), P.4r (woodcut); R.2v, P.6r; orthography slightly regularized for clarity.

130. In this way, the *ars moriendi* could be seen as a significant late medieval example of what Lynch describes as the medieval church’s long-term project of “fostering ties of invented kinship, infusing them with spiritual meaning and ethical significance, and using them creatively to teach important lessons about constructing larger social bonds beyond the blood kindred.” Katherine Lynch, *Individuals, Families, and Communities in Europe, 1200–1800: The Urban Foundations of Western Society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 72.

131. Respectively Caxton, *Art and Craft to Know Well to Die*, B.3r (the ending), and *Craft for to Deye (Ars moriendi)*, A.1r (the beginning).

132. Note on f. 3r: “This boke was appertaninge to Marye Dennis some tymes Ladie Abesse of a certen nunrey in Glocestershyre. She dyed in Bristowe 1595 a good olde maide verie virtuouse and goldye and is buried in the Church of the Gauntes on the grene.”

133. For a description, see S. J. Ogilvie-Thomson, *Index of Middle English Prose Handlist VIII: Manuscripts Containing Middle English Prose in Oxford College Libraries* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1991), 25–26. The manuscript appears to be a fascicle, or a rough copy of a booklet exemplar “in its original limp parchment binding” by someone otherwise engaged as a copyist of a more conventional kind; see Alexandra Gillespie on “limp bindings” in “Bookbinding,” in *The Production of Books in England, 1350–1500*, ed. Daniel Wakelin and Alexandra Gillespie (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 150–72, at 168–69; see also J. A. Szirmai, *The Archaeology of Medieval Bookbinding* (Aldershot, England: Ashgate, 1999), 285–319. On this particular book as a booklet fascicle, see Pamela Robinson, “The ‘Booklet’: A Self-Contained Unit in Composite Manuscripts,” *Codicologica* 3 (1980): 46–69, at 47.

134. William’s age is given as forty-five in a writ of April 8, 1499, inquisition 27 April 14 Henry VII in *Calendar of Inquisitions Post-Mortem, Henry VII* (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1898), 2.121, no. 179.

135. *Calendar of Patent Rolls, Edward IV and Henry VI, 1466–77* (London: Public Records Office, 1900), 146, 227, 485, 570, 607.

136. Two years before, Edmund Caryngton had reportedly said to him, “I promise yow be my feith and trouth to pay yow xx s. att Ester nex commyng,” before witnesses in the cemetery at the church. London Metropolitan Archives, MS DL/C/A/001/MS09065, 124rv. The case is online, with translation, in the Consistory Database (<http://digitalhistory.concordia.ca/consistory/index.php>), although the remarks there suggest that this John Mannyngham might be the Oxford humanist, rather than the London resident knight. The Oxford D.D. named John Mannyngham may be a nephew of the Mannyngham who lived in the parish of St. Katherine Cree. On the Oxford divine, see A. B. Emden, *Biographical Register of the University of Oxford to 1500* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1958), 1217; and on his books and original verse, see William O’Sullivan, “An Early Oxford Humanist,” *Bodleian Library Review* 7 (1962): 28–39; and David Rundle, “Of Republics and Tyrants: Aspects of Quattrocento Humanist Writings and Their Reception in England, c. 1400—c. 1460”

(D.Phil. diss., Oxford University, 1997).

137. John's will is PRO, Prob. 11/11/577. Isabel's will was proved in 1521 (PRO, Prob. 11/20/172), making bequests among others to Dan John Mannyngham, a monk of Westminster and relative of her dead husband, as well as to Simon the Anker of London Wall, author of the Suso-influenced *Fruyte of Redemcyon*, printed by Wynkyn de Worde in 1514 (STC 22557).

138. Besides taking care not to give any unnecessary moneys to her husband's relatives, Isabel's will also makes relatively elaborate postmortem provisions for prayers for herself and Sir John, taking care to renew the obsequies around the family tomb at Holy Trinity.

139. Sir Reynold Bray, who helped bring Henry VII to the throne, was a major figure at court, associated with Margaret Beaufort as well as the king, praised by Polydore Virgil as "pater patriae, homo severus" (father of his country, a man of gravity) in his *Anglica historia*: see M. M. Condon, "Bray, Sir Reynold (c. 1440–1503)," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004–, accessed July 3, 2013, doi:10.1093/ref:odnb/3295. Sir John Shaa was a goldsmith, sheriff in 1496 when Mannyngham's will was written, and mayor in 1500–1501. His father, Sir Edmund Shaa, also a mayor, was a prominent Yorkist. After the death of Sir John, it appears that Shaa helped broker a deal between Isabel and William involving the transfer of Little Paxton Manor. See Joseph Biancalana, *The Fee Tail and the Common Recovery in Medieval England, 1176–1502* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 435, no. 18.

140. "Fornicavit cum Katerina Sydney vidua commorante in parochia sancte Katerine Crichurch et vult divorciari ab uxore sua." LMA, DL/C/B/043/MS09064/002, *Act Book of the Commissary Court of the Diocese of London, 1470–1500*, 2.89r. My thanks to Shannon McSheffrey for this reference.

141. Star Chamber proceedings, Easter term 8, Henry VII, no. 59, National Archives, Kew, reference number STAC 1/2/59. W. Paley Baildon, ed., printed and discussed the case in "Star Chamber Cases, No. V. Staunton v. Shuckborough and Others," *Home Counties Magazine* 10 (1908): 41–46.

142. *Treatise of Ghostly Battle*, Horstmann, *Yorkshire Writers*, 2.423–24.

CHAPTER 5. THE EXERCISE OF DEATH IN HENRICIAN ENGLAND

1. Martin Luther, *Preface to the Complete Edition of Luther's Latin Writings*, trans. Lewis William Spitz, vol. 34 of *Luther's Works* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1960), 336–37. "Ego autem, qui me, utcunque irreprehensibilis monachus vivebam, sentirem coram Deo esse peccatorem inquietissimae conscientiae, nec mea satisfactione placatum confidere possem, non amabam, imo odiebam iustum et punientem peccatores Deum ... indignabar Deo" (Martin Luther, *Vorrede zu Band I der Opera Latina der Wittenberger Ausgabe*. 1545, vol. 4 of *Luthers Werke in Auswahl*, ed. Otto Clemens (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1967), 421–28, at 427.

2. Luther, *Preface*, 337. "Revelari per evangelium iustitiam Dei, scilicet passivam, qua nos Deus misericors iustificat per fidem, sicut scriptum est: iustus ex fide vivit" (Luther, *Luthers Werke in Auswahl*, 4.427). Luther is quoting Romans 1:17.

3. Schart was a substantial landowner, patron of the University of Wittenberg, and political counselor to Frederick the Wise; see David C. Steinmetz, *Luther and Staupitz: An Essay in the Intellectual Origins of the Protestant Reformation* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1980), 75–78. Translations from the sermon are from Martin Luther, *A Sermon on Preparing to Die, 1519*, trans. Martin H. Bertram, vol. 42 of *Luther's Works* (1960), 99–115. For the German, see Martin Luther, *Ein Sermon von der Bereitung zum Sterben* in vol. 2 of *Luthers Werke*, ed. J. F. K. Knaake et al., 68

vols. (Weimar: Böhlau, 1884), 685–97.

4. Luther, *Sermon* (trans. Bertram), 101. This is the sixth point of the sermon: “Die erste daserschrockliche bild des todtis, die ander das graulich manichfeltig bilde der sund, die dritte das untreglich und unvormeydliche bild der hellen und ewiges vordamnueß” (Knaake, 2.686).

5. Luther, *Sermon* (trans. Bertram), 103. Ninth point: “Nu muß man yn dißem handell allen vleyß ankeren, das man dyßer dreyer bild keyns zu hauß lade, noch den teuffell ubir die thur male, sie werden selbs alzustarck hereyn fallen und das hertz mit yhem ansehen, disputirn und zengen gantz und gar ynhabenn wollenn” (Knaake, 2.688).

6. Luther, *Sermon* (trans. Bertram), 108, 107. Fourteenth point: “Alßo solnn wyr die selben bild auch lassen her fallen und abfallen, wie sie wollen ader mugen, und nur gedencken, das wyr an dem willen gottis hangen, der ist, das wir in Christo haften und festiglich gleuben, unßer tod, sund und hell sey unß yn yhm ubirwunden und mug uns nit schaden, Auff das alßo Christus bild yn unß alleyn sey, und mit yhm disputiren und handelnn” (Knaake, 2.692).

7. See Gottfried G. Krodell, “Luther’s Work on the Catechism in the Context of Late Medieval Catechetical Literature,” *Concordia Journal* 25 (1999): 364–404, at 398–99; Jared Wicks, “Applied Theology at the Deathbed: Luther and the Late-Medieval Tradition of the *Ars moriendi*,” *Gregorium* 79.2 (1998): 345–68; Hans-Martin Barth, “Leben und sterben können: Brechungen der spätmittelalterlichen ‘ars moriendi’ in der Theologie Martin Luthers,” in *Ars moriendi: Erwägungen zur Kunst des Sterbens*, ed. Harald Wagner and Torsten Kruse (Freiburg: Herder, 1989), 45–66; Reinhard Schwarz, “Das Bild des Todes im Bild Lebens überwinden: Eine Interpretation von Luthers *Sermon von der Bereitung zum Sterben*,” in *Gewissheit angesichts des Sterbens*, ed. Reinhard Schwarz (Erlangen: Martin Luther, 1998), 32–64; and Austra Reinis, *Reforming the Art of Dying: The Ars moriendi in the German Reformation (1519–1528)* (Aldershot, England: Ashgate, 2007), 47–75. For a study that discusses the woodcut *ars moriendi* specifically, see Dick Akerboom, “‘Only the Image of Christ in Us’: Continuity and Discontinuity Between the Late Medieval *ars moriendi* and Luther’s *Sermon von der Bereitung zum Sterben*,” in *Spirituality Renewed: Studies on Significant Representatives of the Modern Devotion*, ed. Hein Blommesteijn, Charles Caspers, and Rijcklof Hofman (Leuven: Peeters, 2003), 209–72.

8. See, e.g., Alistair McGrath, *Iustitia Dei: A History of the Christian Doctrine of Justification* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

9. Luther, *Sermon* (trans. Bertram), 102–3. Sixth point: “Im leben solt man sich mit des todtis gedanken uben und zu unß foddern, wan er noch ferne ist und nicht treybt” (Knaake, 2.687).

10. See Chapter 1.

11. On Luther’s admiration of Staupitz, see Steinmetz, *Luther and Staupitz*. On Staupitz’s religiosity and pastoral theory, see Berndt Hamm, *The Reformation of Faith in the Context of Late Medieval Theology and Piety*, ed. Robert James Bast (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 114–25.

12. Luther, *Sermon* (trans. Bertram), 104. Tenth point: “Du must den todt nit yn yhm selbs, noch yn dir odder deyner natur, noch yn denen, die durch gottis zorn getodtet seyn, die der todt ubir wunden hatt, ansehen odder betrachten, du bist anders verloren und wirst mit yhn ubir wunden, Sondern deyn augen, deyns hertzen gedanken unnd alle deyne syn gewaltiglich keren von dem selben bild, und den todt starck und emsig ansehen nur yn denen, die yn gottis gnaden gestorben und den todt ubir wunden haben, furnemlich yn Christo, darnach yn allen seynen heyligen” (Knaake, 2.289).

13. Luther, *Sermon* (trans. Bertram), 102, 104. Seventh point: “Die sund wechst und wirt groß auch durch yhr zuvill ansehen und zu tieff bedencken. Da hilfft zu die

blodickeit unßers gewissen, das sich selbs vor gott schemet und gewlich strafft” (Knaake, 2.687).

14. Hamm, *Reformation of Faith*, 88–127. See Chapter 4. See also Ronald K. Rittgers recent and nuanced study, *The Reformation of Suffering: Pastoral Theology and Lay Piety in Late Medieval and Early Modern Germany* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).

15. Luther, *Sermon* (trans. Bertram), 112. Eighteenth point: “Soll keyn Christen mensch an seynem end zweyfellnn, [17] er sey nit alleyn yn seynem sterben, ßondernn gewiß seyn, das noch antzeigung [18] des sacraments auff yhn gar viel augen sehen, Zum ersten gottis selber und [19] Christi, darumb das er seynem wort gleubt und seynem sacrament anhangt, [20] darnach die lieben engel, die heyligen und alle Christenn” (Knaake, 2.695).

16. Hamm, *Reformation of Faith*, 8.

17. “Habes in Anglia qui de tuis scriptis optime sentiant et sunt hi maximi” (qtd. in Carl Meyer, “Henry VIII Burns Luther’s Books, 12 May 1521,” *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 9, no. 2 [1958]: 173–87, at 174).

18. “Your Grace may call before you the printers and booksellers, and give them strait charge that they bring one of his books into England nor translate them into English” (qtd. in Meyer, “Henry VIII,” 180).

19. “Venice: May 1521,” in *Calendar of State Papers Relating to English Affairs in the Archives of Venice*, vol. 3, 1520–1526, ed. Rawden Brown (London: Longman, Roberts, and Green, 1869), 119–30, item 213.

20. See Craig D’Alton, “The Suppression of Lutheran Heretics in England, 1526–1529,” *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 54 (2003): 228–253, at 231–234. For Thomas More’s activity as persecutor of Lutherans at this time, see James Simpson, *Burning to Read: English Fundamentalism and Its Reformation Opponents* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2007), 47–52.

21. John Foxe, *The Unabridged Acts and Monuments Online* (1563 edition) (HRI Online Publications, Sheffield, 2011), 658. Available from: <http://www.johnfoxe.org>. Accessed: July 6, 2013.

22. See *The Book of Common Prayer: The Texts of 1549, 1559, and 1662* ed. Brian Cummings (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), xvii–xxv, 72–81, 164–70, 714–16, 741–42. See Peter Marshall for an excellent overview of changes in official doctrine of the English church in this decade: *Beliefs and the Dead in Reformation England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).

23. See STC 1193–67, printed by Thomas Berthelet in 1540, although with the date 1534 on the title page. The letter of dedication (to Thomas Cromwell) presents the work as a translation by Richard Tracy of an anonymous Latin work. In the seventeenth century, the work was attributed to John Frith. For discussion, see John Frith, *The Works of John Frith*, ed. N. T. Wright (Appleford, England: Sutton Courtenay, 1978), 588–93; Alexandra Walsham, “Vox Piscis: Or the Book-Fish: Providence and the Uses of the Reformation Past in Caroline Cambridge,” *English Historical Review* 114 (1999): 574–606, at 598–600 (esp. 598 n. 5 for sixteenth-century assertions that the work’s author was Tracy).

24. David William Atkinson, *The English Ars moriendi* (New York: Peter Lang, 1992), xv–xvi, an influential anthology of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century death texts. Atkinson’s negative account of early death texts is often indebted to Nancy Lee Beaty, ed., *The Craft of Dying: A Study in the Literary Tradition of the “Ars moriendi” in England* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1970), which in general also maintains a derogatory attitude toward the medieval part of the tradition.

25. *The Great Chronicle of London*, ed. A. H. Thomas and I. D. Thornley (London: G. W. Jones, 1938), 333; S. P. Harper, “Divide and Rule? Henry VII, the Mercers, Merchant Taylors and the Corporation of London,” in *Concerns and Preoccupations*,

ed. Linda Clark, *The Fifteenth Century 11* (Woodbridge, England: Boydell, 2012), 127–40, at 131. See Susan Brigden's seminal study, *London and the Reformation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989).

26. K. J. Kesselring, *Mercy and Authority in the Tudor State*, Cambridge Studies in Early Modern British History (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 36; on the increase of crimes punishable by death under the early Tudors, see also J. A. Sharpe, *Judicial Punishment in England* (London: Faber and Faber, 1990), 30–34, and the final chapter of his *Crime in Early Modern England, 1550–1750* (New York: Longman, 1999); see also John G. Bellamy, *Crime and Public Order in England in the Later Middle Ages* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1973), at 189, and his *The Criminal Trial in Later Medieval England: Felony Before the Courts from Edward I to the Sixteenth Century* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998), at 154. For “gallows speeches” in the later early modern period, see J. A. Sharpe, ““Last Dying Speeches”: Religion, Ideology and Public Execution in Seventeenth-Century England,” *Past and Present* 107 (1985): 144–67.

27. Thomas More, *A Dialogue of Comfort Against Tribulation*, in vol. 12 of *Complete Works of St. Thomas More*, ed. Louis Martz and Frank Manley (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1976); and John Fisher, *English Works of John Fisher, Bishop of Rochester (1469–1535): Sermons and Other Writings, 1520–1535*, edited by Cecilia A. Hatt (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).

28. Thomas Lupset, *The Waye of Dyenge Well (A Treatise of Dying Well)* (Thomas Berthelet, 1534) (STC 16934); Richard Whitford, *Daily Exercise of Death* (Robert Redman, 1534?) (STC 25413.7); Desiderius Erasmus, *Preparation to Deathe* (Thomas Berthelet, 1538) (STC 10505).

29. Erasmus, *Preparation*, A ii.r.

30. On Whitford, see most recently Mary Carpenter Erler, *Reading and Writing During the Dissolution: Monks, Friars, and Nuns, 1530–1558* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013); and Alexandra da Costa, *Reforming Printing: Syon Abbey's Defence of Orthodoxy, 1525–1534* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012). Vincent Gillespie has published a series of important studies of the book culture and library at Syon, many of which include discussion of Whitford: “Syon and the English Market for Continental Printed Books: The Incunable Phase,” in *Syon Abbey and Its Books: Reading, Writing and Religion, c. 1400–1700*, ed. E.A. Jones and Alexandra Walsham (Woodbridge, England: Boydell, 2010), 104–28; “Syon and the New Learning,” in *The Religious Orders in Pre-Reformation England*, ed. James G. Clark (Woodbridge, England: Boydell, 2002), 75–95; and “The Book and the Brotherhood: Reflections on the Lost Library of Syon Abbey,” in *The English Medieval Book: Studies in Memory of Jeremy Griffiths*, ed. A. S. G. Edwards, Vincent Gillespie, and Ralph Hanna (London: British Library, 2000), 185–208.

31. James Hogg has published a transcription of the 1530 printing of *Werke for Householdiers* by Wynkyn de Worde (STC 25422); in the same volume, Hogg includes a transcription of *A Daily Exercise of Death* published by John Waylande in 1537 (STC 25414), where the death text appears with another printing of *Werke for Householdiers* (STC 25425.5). All quotations are from Hogg's edition, with the *Werke for Householdiers* checked against the 1537 John Waylande compilation. Punctuation has been amended. For the edition, see “*A Werke for Housholders*” and “*A Dayly Exerccyse and Experyence of Dethe*,” ed. James Hogg, vol. 5 of *Richard Whytford* (Salzburg: Institut für Anglistik und Amerikanistik, Universität Salzburg, 1979). Quotation here in Whitford, *Werke* (Hogg), at page 2, lines 19–23.

32. Whitford, *Daily Exercise* (Hogg), 64.4–5, 64.8–11. *Daily Exercise* was printed three times: 1534 (STC Addenda 25413.7), 1537 (25414), 1538 (Robert Redman) (25415). No manuscript copy of the text survives.

33. Whitford, *Werke* (Hogg), 4.4–6.

34. Whitford, *Werke* (Hogg), 4.7, 10.23.
35. Whitford, *Werke* (Hogg), 7.9. For the earlier householder guide, see W.A. Pantin, "Instructions for a Devout and Literate Layman," in *Medieval Learning and Literature: Essays Presented to Richard William Hunt*, edited by J. J. G. Alexander and M. T. Gibson (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976), 398–422.
36. Whitford, *Werke* (Hogg), 2.25–3.6.
37. Whitford, *Werke* (Hogg), 8.5, 8.15–19.
38. Whitford, *Werke* (Hogg), 9.17–19.
39. Whitford, *Daily Exercise* (Hogg), 95.28–29, where the *Daily Exercise* alludes to "your boke for householders."
40. Whitford, *Daily Exercise* (Hogg), 65.11–14.
41. Whitford, *Daily Exercise* (Hogg), 68.16–18.
42. Whitford, *Daily Exercise* (Hogg), 70.6–11, 70.20–21, 71.13.
43. Whitford, *Daily Exercise* (Hogg), 87.15–19.
44. Whitford, *Daily Exercise* (Hogg), 92.17, 89.16, 97.19–24.
45. Whitford, *Daily Exercise* (Hogg), 96.25–27, 96.21–24; Whitford is quoting Phil. 1:23.
46. See Chapter 3.
47. Whitford, *Daily Exercise* (Hogg), 104.28–105.1.
48. Whitford, *Daily Exercise* (Hogg), 93.7–13.
49. Whitford, *Daily Exercise* (Hogg), 93.23, 93.29.
50. Whitford, *Daily Exercise* (Hogg), 94.11–13. Compare the opening of *Visitation E* in Carl Horstmann, ed., *Yorkshire Writers: Richard Rolle of Hampole, an English Father of the Church, and His Followers*, 2 vols. (London: Swan Sonnenschein, 1895–96), 2.450.
51. Whitford, *Daily Exercise* (Hogg), 94.21–24. Compare *Craft of Dying* in G. R. Morgan, "A Critical Edition of Caxton's *The Art and Craft to Know Well to Die* and *Ars Moriendi* Together with the Antecedent Manuscript Material," 2 vols. (Ph.D. diss., Oxford University, 1972), 2.31.4–5: "Lord I put the deeth of oure lord Jhesu Cryst bytwene me & myn evel dedes, bytwene me & thy juggement." See also *Visitation E* in Horstmann, *Yorkshire Writers*, 2.455: "þe wilful passioun of oure lord Jhesu Crist ... be it bitwyxe me and myne evele dedys."
52. Da Costa, *Reforming Printing*, 116.
53. Da Costa reconstructs the passage from a combination of the 1534 Redman and 1537 Wayland editions. I follow this reconstruction here (*Reforming Printing*, 117).
54. Da Costa, *Reforming Printing*, 117, 116.
55. On the Holy Maid of Kent, see Diane Watt, *Secretaries of God: Women Prophets in Late Medieval and Early Modern England* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1997), 51–80.
56. Whitford, *Daily Exercise* (Hogg), 68.17, 68.19–69.5. The final sentence seems to be a nonsequitur and it seems possible the passage was a late insertion.
57. Whitford, *Daily Exercise* (Hogg), 92.18, 93.4.
58. Hogg does not include the addendum in his edition. I quote here from the 1537 edition (STC 25414), F.i–F.ii.
59. STC 25414, F.iii.
60. On the genre of martyrs' lives in the fifteenth century, see Karen Winstead, *Virgin Martyrs: Legends of Sainthood in Late Medieval England* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1997) and Catherine Sanok, *Her Life Historical: Exemplarity and Female Saints' Lives in Late Medieval England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007).
61. Richard Whitford, *Pipe of Perfection*, published by Robert Redman in 1532 (ST 25421), 28r–54v.
62. On Berthelet, see K. F. Pantzer, "Thomas Berthelet (d. 1555)," in *Oxford*

Dictionary of National Biography (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004–), accessed July 3, 2013, doi:10.1093/ref:odnb/37187; and Colin Clair, “Thomas Berthelet, Royal Printer,” *Gutenberg Jahrbuch* (1966): 177–81. On the politics of royal publication, with special reference to Berthelet’s output during the early 1530s, see James Christopher Warner, *Henry VIII’s Divorce: Literature and the Politics of the Printing Press* (Woodbridge, England: Boydell, 1998), esp. chapter 1. See also Pamela Neville-Sington, “Press, Politics and Religion,” in *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain*, ed. Lotte Hellinga and J. B. Trapp, 6 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 3.576–607; and Peter Blayney, *The Stationers’ Company and the Printers of London, 1501–1557* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013).

63. Berthelet, 1531 (STC 104763) and 1532 (STC 10470).

64. STC 16934, Berthelet 1541 (STC 16935), Berthelet 1546 (STC 16932).

65. The text went through twenty Latin editions in six years, with four editions in French, two in Dutch and Spanish, and one in German. See John O’Malley’s introductory note to his translation in *Spiritualia and Pastoralia*, vol. 70 of the *Collected Works of Erasmus*, 89 vols. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998), xxvi–xxix. There is no critical edition of the early modern English translation of the work and I quote here from the 1538 edition (STC 10505).

66. Warner, *Henry VIII’s Divorce*. See Jonathan Hughes, “Thomas Boleyn,” in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, accessed July 3, 2013, doi:10.1093/ref:odnb/2795.

67. Hughes, “Thomas Boleyn.”

68. Alberto Tenenti, *Il senso della morte e l’amore della vita nel Rinascimento (Franca e Italia)* (Turin: Einaudi, 1957), 123. Qtd. and trans. in Hilmar M. Pabel, “Erasmus of Rotterdam’s *Ars moriendi*,” in *Early Modern Catholicism: Essays in Honour of John W. O’Malley, S. J.*, ed. Kathleen M. Comerford and Hilmar Matthias Pabel (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001), 26–45, at 31.

69. See Craig R. Thompson, *Colloquies*, vol. 39 of *Collected Works of Erasmus* (1997), 763.

70. See Neville-Sington, “Press, Politics, and Religion.”

71. Erasmus, *Preparation*, A.iii. See Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 3.6.vi; biblical quotations are from Rev. 14:13 and Phil. 1:23, 21.

72. See Morgan, “Critical Edition,” 2.3.12–13, 5.7–8, 4.14. The sententia, which may originally be from John Chrysostom, is also found in Baudri de Bourgueil’s *De visitatione infirmorum*, in *Patrologia Latina*, ed. Jacques-Paul Migne, 40.1147–1158 (Paris, 1854–1903), at 40.1152.

73. Morgan, “Critical Edition,” 2.10.3–4.

74. Compare Pabel, “Erasmus of Rotterdam’s *Ars moriendi*,” and his “The Peaceful People of Christ: The Irenic Ecclesiology of Erasmus of Rotterdam,” in *Erasmus’ Visions of the Church*, ed. Hilmar M. Pabel (Kirkville, Mo.: Sixteenth Century, 1995), 57–93.

75. Erasmus, *Preparation*, A.iii.v.

76. Erasmus, *Preparation*, C.ii.

77. Erasmus, *Preparation*, D.ii, D.vi.

78. Erasmus, *Preparation*, E.iii.v.

79. Erasmus, *Preparation*, E.iii.

80. Erasmus, *Preparation*, E.iii.

81. Erasmus, *Preparation*, F.iii.v.

82. Erasmus, *Preparation*, E.vii.

83. Erasmus, *Preparation*, F.iii.r-v.

84. Erasmus, *Preparation*, F.v.

85. Erasmus, *Preparation*, E.v.r-v.

86. Erasmus, *Preparation*, A.iii.r-v.

87. Erasmus, *Preparation*, A.v.v.

88. Erasmus, *Preparation*, E.vii. “Many flatter themselves with vulgar remedies of none effect, as whan one counsayleth hym, to commande his executours to bury hym in the coote of suche or suche friers of monkes, or to make an avowe to god, that if he recover, he wyl be professed in the order of the monkes of Charterhowse.... I knewe a woman of noble burthe and of high prudence, whiche by testamente devysed to a prieste a good somme of money, to synge masse dayly, during the space of a yere at Rome, as though the masses at Rome were of more holynes than the masses of Englande. And yet that money had ben better bestowed, if she had bound that priest never to go to Rome. For I know the person very well, whom I juge rather to do sacrifice to Venus than to god.” The first practice Erasmus condemns here was common among fifteenth-century Londoners.

89. Erasmus, *Preparation*, D.iiii.

90. Erasmus, *Preparation*, D.ii.r–v.

91. *A Treatise of Charity* was published in 1533, 1535, and 1539 (STC 16939, 16940, 16941); *An Exhortation to Young Men* in 1535, 1538, and 1544 (STC 16936, 16937, 16938); *A Treatise of Dying Well* in 1534 and 1541 (STC 16934, 16935). Berthelet also published *A Sermon of Saint Chrysostome* with an ascription to Lupset in 1542 (STC 14639), including it in *Tho. Lupsets Works* in 1546 (STC 16392; reprinted in 1560, STC 16933).

92. For this account, see Thomas Lupset, *The Life and Works of Thomas Lupset*, ed. John Archer Gee (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1928); Thomas F. Mayer, “Thomas Lupset (c. 1495–1530),” in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, accessed July 3, 2013, doi:10.1093/ref:odnb/17201; and Andrew Taylor, “John Leland’s Communities of the Epigram,” in *Neo-Latin Poetry in the British Isles*, ed. L. B. T. Houghton and Gesine Manuwald (London: Bristol Classical Press, 2012), 15–35 (on Lupset’s relations with other educated Londoners). Gee, in Lupset, *Life and Works*, 157–74, discusses the Lupset canon. Quotations from Lupset’s works are from the Gee edition of *Life and Works*; I adopt here modernized titles.

93. Mayer, “Thomas Lupset.”

94. Thomas Starkey, *A Dialogue Between Reginald Pole and Thomas Lupset*, ed. Kathleen M. Burton (London: Chatto and Windus, 1948). On the historical and political context of this work, see Thomas F. Mayer, *Thomas Starkey and the Commonweal: Humanist Politics and Religion in the Reign of Henry VIII* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989).

95. Gee accepts several translations as also by Lupset (Lupset, *Life and Works*, 157–74).

96. See discussion of Carpenter’s circle in Chapter 2.

97. For discussion, see Ralph Hanna, “Middle English Books and Middle English Literary History,” *Modern Philology* 102, no. 2 (2004): 157–78, who notes the connection with Lupset at 168 n. 29. Before including it in *Tho. Lupsets Works*, Berthelet published *The Gathered Counsels of Isidore* with no authorial inscription in 1534, 1539, and 1544 (STC 14270, 14270.5, 14271).

98. Lupset, *Treatise of Dying* (Gee), 271.13.

99. Lupset, *Treatise of Dying* (Gee), 276.25–26.

100. Lupset, *Treatise of Dying* (Gee), 285.15–16.

101. Lupset, *Treatise of Dying* (Gee), 270.22, 270.11–13, 270.21.

102. Lupset, *Treatise of Dying* (Gee), 279.17–24.

103. See Chapter 2.

104. Lupset, *Treatise of Dying* (Gee), 287.22–27.

105. Thomas More, *The Last Things*, ed. Katherine Gardiner Rogers, vol. 1 of *The Complete Works of St. Thomas More* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1997).

106. Lupset, *Treatise of Dying* (Gee), 289.14–16. See Whitford’s attack in *Werke*

(Hogg), pages 7.29–8.2, on “pastymes, that is to say all maner of unlawful games and suche dysportes as done drawe people rather to vyce than to vertue whiche more properly may be called lose tymes than pastimes.”

107. Lupset, *Treatise of Dying* (Gee), 289.28–29, 289.31, 289.30.

108. Lupset, *Treatise of Dying* (Gee), 290.3–290.14.

109. Lupset, *Treatise of Dying* (Gee), 290.3–290.14. See Thomas F. Mayer, “Reginald Pole (1500–1558),” in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, accessed July 3, 2013, doi:10.1093/ref:odnb/22456.

110. Starkey, *Dialogue*, chapter 1.

111. Lupset, *An Exhortation to Young Men* (Gee), 253.16–17, 257.7, 257.3–4. The date of the treatise is early 1529.

112. Lupset, *A Treatise of Charity* (Gee), 230.26–27.

113. Gee, in Lupset, *Life and Works*, 172–73, quotes the summary of this work in Lily’s “Virorum aliquot in Britannia qui nostro seculo eruditione & doctrina clari, memorabilesque fuerunt elogia,” and plausibly suggests it is the same work John Collins, chaplain to Pole’s elder brother, Henry, Lord Montagu, admitted burning under examination, two months before Lord Montagu was beheaded at the Tower of London.

114. Lupset, *An Exhortation to Young Men* (Gee), 235.1–8.

115. Lupset, *An Exhortation to Young Men* (Gee), 253.24–27.

116. Lupset, *An Exhortation to Young Men* (Gee), 257.21–22, 257.14.

117. Lupset, *An Exhortation to Young Men* (Gee), 262.27–32.

118. Lupset, *An Exhortation to Young Men* (Gee), 259.22–23, 259.31–32.

119. Lupset, *An Exhortation to Young Men* (Gee), 237.2. Edmund Withypoll was born in 1510 or 1513, and thus was nineteen or sixteen when the work was written. He died in his seventies during the reign of Elizabeth. For his biography, see A. K. D. Hayward, “Withypoll, Edmund (1510/13–82), of London; Walthamstow, Essex and Christchurch, Ipswich, Suff.,” in *The History of Parliament: The House of Commons, 1509–1558*, ed. S. T. Bindoff (Woodbridge, England: Boydell, 1982), available online at www.historyofparliamentonline.org.

120. Lupsett, *Treatise of Dying* (Gee), 266.19.

121. Note that the importance of reading Seneca is mentioned several times in the *Exhortation*, as a remedy against the passions at 254, as an expert on the proper attitude to worldly goods at 246, for general instruction on virtue at 245, part of a brief reading list of crucial works.

122. Lupset, *Treatise of Dying* (Gee), 267.7–15.

123. Lupset, *Treatise of Dying* (Gee), 267.36–268.2.

124. Lupset, *Treatise of Dying* (Gee), 268.7.

125. Lupset, *Treatise of Dying* (Gee), 282.22–8.

126. Lupset, *Treatise of Dying* (Gee), 281.26–32.

127. Lupset, *Treatise of Dying* (Gee), 270.34–271.8.

128. On Whittington, Phillip, and the post of schoolmaster to the king’s henchmen, see Nicholas Orme, *Medieval Schools: From Roman Britain to Renaissance England* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2006), 121–22, 251–22.

129. See Edward Hall, *Hall’s Chronicle*, ed. Henry Ellis (London: Johnson, 1809), 243.

130. Lupset, *Treatise of Dying* (Gee), 277.12–14.

131. Lupset, *Treatise of Dying* (Gee) 280.15–20.

132. Lupset, *Treatise of Dying* (Gee), 281.7–16.

133. Lupsett, *Treatise of Dying* (Gee), 290.10–11, 3–6.

134. See Chapter 3.

135. More, *Last Things*, page 139, line 14–page 140, line 7.

136. *The Commonplace Book of Robert Reynes of Acre: An Edition of MS Tanner*

407, ed. Louis Cameron (New York: Garland, 1980), 245–46. For the genre, see Rossell Hope Robbins, “Signs of Death in Middle English,” *Mediaeval Studies* 32 (1970): 282–98.

CONCLUSION

1. In this sense, my approach is necessarily simpler than the one adopted in a major forthcoming medieval literary history edited by David Wallace, with its focus on interurban networks as well as nodes. See David Wallace, ed., *Europe: A Literary History, 1348–1418*, 2 vols. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, forthcoming).

2. Eamon Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England 1400–1580*, 2nd ed. (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2005).

3. Here I echo the critique of the scholarship of affectivity made by David Aers in chapter 1 of David Aers and Lynn Staley, *The Powers of the Holy: Religion, Politics, and Gender in Late Medieval English Culture* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1988).

4. David Lawton, “Voice After Arundel,” in *After Arundel: Religious Writing in Fifteenth-Century England*, ed. Vincent Gillespie and Kantik Ghosh (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 2011), 133–52.

5. *Sermon of Dead Men*, in *Lollard Sermons*, ed. Gloria Cigman, EETS, OS 294 (Oxford: Early English Text Society, 1980), 207–40.

6. *Sermon of Dead Men*, lines 287–95.

7. *Sermon of Dead Men*, lines 85–87.

8. Walter Benjamin, “The Story-teller: Observations on the Works of Nikolai Leskov,” in *Walter Benjamin: Selected Writings*, vol. 3, 1935–1938, trans. Howard Eiland and ed. Michael W. Jennings (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2006), 68–102, at 93–94.

9. See, e.g., James W. Green, *Beyond the Good Death: The Anthropology of Modern Dying* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008). On morbidity and Huizinga, see the Introduction above.

10. James Simpson, *The Oxford History of English Literature*, vol. 2, 1370–1547: *Reform and Cultural Revolution* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).

11. Maura Nolan, *John Lydgate and the Making of Public Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005); Paul Strohm, *Politique: Languages of Statecraft Between Chaucer and Shakespeare*, Conway Lectures in Medieval Studies (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 2005); Gillespie and Ghosh, *After Arundel*.

12. W. B. Yeats, “Sailing to Byzantium.”

13. See, for example, the series of books published by the University of Notre Dame Press in the series “Reformations: Medieval and Early Modern,” edited by David Aers, Sarah Beckwith, and James Simpson (<http://undpress.nd.edu/series/S00166/books>). See also Brian Cummings and James Simpson, eds., *Cultural Reformations: Medieval and Renaissance in Literary History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).

14. *The Book of Common Prayer: The Texts of 1549, 1559, and 1662*, ed. Brian Cummings (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), especially Cummings’s notes on the 1549 and 1559 versions of the visitation of the sick and the burial of the dead, at 714–16 and 741–43.

15. Mary Hampson Patterson, *Domesticating the Reformation: Protestant Best Sellers, Private Devotion, and the Revolution of English Piety* (Madison: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2007), 103. On the “traditional” emphasis on community in Becon’s *ars moriendi*, see Christopher Marsh, “In the Name of God?”

Will-Making and Faith in Early Modern England,” in *The Records of the Nation: The Public Record Office, 1838–1988, the British Record Society, 1888–1988*, edited by G. H. Martin and Peter Spufford (Woodbridge, England: Boydell, 1990), 214–49.

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Magdalene College Pepys MS 1584
Peterhouse College MS 271
St. John's College MS S. 35
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British Library Harley MS 1706
British Library Harley MS 2253
British Library Harley MS 2322
British Library Harley MS 2383
British Library Harley MS 2398
British Library Harley MS 4011
British Library Lansdowne MS 699
British Library Lansdowne MS 762
British Library Lansdowne MS 874
British Library Royal MS 5.C.iii
British Library Royal MS 10.E.4
British Library Royal MS 17.A.xxv
British Library Royal MS 17.A.xxvi
British Library Royal MS 17.B.17
British Library Royal MS 17.C.xviii
British Library Sloane MS 2515
Guildhall MS 25513
Lambeth Palace MS 59
Lambeth Palace MS 363
Lambeth Palace MS 432
Metropolitan Archives, MS DL/C/A/001/MS09065

Metropolitan Archives, MS DL/C/B/004/MS09171
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Yale University Beinecke Library MS 493

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University of Notre Dame MS 67

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Bodleian Library MS 423
Bodleian Library MS 596
Bodleian Library MS 686
Bodleian Library MS 938
Bodleian Library MS 2643
Bodleian Library Ashmole MS 750
Bodleian Library Douce MS 322
Bodleian Library Latin MS th.e. 25
Bodleian Library Laud Miscellaneous MS 210
Bodleian Library Laud Miscellaneous MS 482
Bodleian Library Laud Miscellaneous MS 735
Bodleian Library Rawlinson MS C.894
Bodleian Library Tanner MS 398
Corpus Christi College MS 220
Corpus Christi College MS 237
St. John's College MS 47
St. John's College MS 137
St. John's College MS 208
University College MS 4
University College MS 97

PARIS

Bibliothèque Mazarine MS 3524
Bibliothèque Nationale lat. MS 10209

ROUEN, FRANCE

Rouen Bibliothèque municipale MS Y.6

SAN MARINO, CALIF.

Huntington Library Ellesmere MS 26 A.13

WINDSOR, ENGLAND

Eton College MS 120

Early Printed Books

Appulby, Simon (Simon the Anker), *Fruyte of Redemcyon*
1514, De Worde, STC 22557

The Arte [and] Crafte to Knowe Well to Dye
1490, William Caxton, STC 789
1495, Richard Pynson, STC 790

The Art of Good Lywyng [and] Good Deyng [L'Art de bien mourir]
1503, Anthoine Vérard, STC 791
1505, Wynkyn de Worde (Translated by Andrew Chertsey) STC 792

Becon, Thomas, *The Sycke Mans Salue*
1561, John Day, STC 1757

The Book of Divers Ghostly Matters
1491, William Caxton, STC 3305

The Chastising of God's Children
1492, William Caxton, STC 5065

Contemplations of the Dread and Love of God (Fervor amoris)
1506, Wynkyn de Worde, STC 21259
1519, Wynkyn de Worde, STC 21260

The Craft for to Deye for the Helthe of Mannes Sowle (Ars moriendi)
1491, William Caxton, STC 786
1497, Wynkyn de Worde, STC 787
1506, Wynken de Worde, STC 788

Erasmus, Desiderius, *A Preparation to Deathe*
1538, Thomas Berthelet, STC 10505

Hilton, Walter, *Scala perfectionis*
1494, Wynkyn de Worde, STC 14042

Lupset, Thomas, *A Treatise of Dying Well*
1534, Thomas Berthelet, STC 16934

Whitford, Richard, *A Werke for Householdiers*

1530, Wynkyn de Worde, STC 25422

1537, Robert Redman, STC 25425

1537, John Waylande, STC 25425.5

———, *Pipe of Perfection*

1532, Robert Redman, STC 25421

———, *A Daily Exercise of Death*

1534? Robert Redman, STC Addenda 25413.7

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